

MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES
SPECIAL COLLECTION 3

MEMOIR
of
LEONARD COVINGTON

BY
B. L. C. WAILES

ALSO SOME OF
GENERAL COVINGTON'S
LETTERS



EDITED BY
NELLIE WAILES BRANDON and W. M. DRAKE

1928

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MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

PREFACE BY THE EDITORS

In the Natchez Country the Civil War terminated many plans. Example—In 1861 B. L. C. Wailes of Washington, Mississippi, had prepared a memoir of his father-in-law, Brig. General Leonard Covington, and was about to have it published for the files of the Mississippi Historical Society and for distribution among General Covington's relatives; the War halted him and a year later death stopped him. The manuscript, by good fortune, has been preserved, and two of Col. Wailes's kindred, who lately have turned over its yellowed leaves, would like to complete this gesture of a hand lifted, but arrested, some sixty-seven years ago.

We have appended to the memoir a few letters written by Leonard Covington. These will illustrate the character of the man; they carry some interesting allusions to national affairs, social conditions and the institution of slavery; and they show the hopes and fears of a family about to undertake a great adventure. They give an economic reason for removal to the Mississippi Territory—slave property used for the production of tobacco in Maryland showed little, if any, profit; and it was hoped that applied to cotton on the cheap and fertile lands of the Great Valley it would yield a handsome revenue. This is of historic significance because the same circumstances prompted much of the early immigration to "The Natchez" from Maryland and Virginia. These people came not as individuals or as frontiersmen, but in solid families and bearing the household gods of an old and well ordered society.

General Covington wrote of his new home as a "land of promise," but he did not dream that within fifty years the State of Mississippi would be producing one-fourth of the cotton crop of the South and because of the ability of its statesmen would be exerting a powerful influence in National affairs, that two colleges comparing favorably with the old colleges of the East would be flourishing not many miles from his plantation, that the hurriedly built farm houses would be replaced with many comfortable, and some luxurious, homes, and that his neighbors and their descendants would have as stable a government and as hospitable friends as he had left in Maryland. Col. Wailes saw all these things but did not dream, let us hope, of the wreck into which they were smashed by War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction.

Col. Wailes wrote "less for the public than for the descendants and relatives" of General Covington; so we are sending the memoir to "descendants and relatives." But they are not the individuals whom the author had in mind, for we believe only two relatives who can see these printed words were alive when the manuscript was penned. The new kinsmen will read, we feel sure, with respect and pride.

NELLIE WAILES BRANDON.

W. M. DRAKE.

Natchez, August 20, 1928.

P. S.—All footnotes are by the Editors.

MEMOIR

OF

SKETCH OF B. L. C. WAILES

Born, Columbia County, Ga., August 1st, 1797, died at Washington, Mississippi, November 16th, 1862. Son of Levin Wailes and Eleanor Davies Wailes, both of Prince George's County, Maryland. Came to Mississippi Territory with his parents, in childhood. Married, in 1820, Miss Rebecca Covington of Washington, Mississippi, and lived in Washington the remainder of his life. Was active in the Territorial, and later in the State, Militia; commissioned Major in 1820, Lt. Colonel in 1824. Member of Mississippi Legislature in 1825. President of Adams Athenaeum, a county literary society. Member of Board of Trustees of Jefferson College for many years and very active in its management. Assistant Professor of Geology, University of Mississippi, in charge of field work; in 1854 published *Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi*. Made a valuable collection of minerals and fossils. First President of Mississippi Historical Society. Served for many years as Deputy Register of U. S. Land Office; in later life gave considerable time to management of Warren County property (plantations) of relatives. Kept a diary, recording simple events and expenses at home as well as travels. The Historian Claiborne called him "in science the foremost man of the State." His life was one of incessant, intense and useful activity.



by his kinsman

BENJAMIN LEONARD COVINGTON WAILES

President of the Historical Society of Mississippi

Member Hist. Soc. of Pennsylvania

and Cor. Member

of Hist. Soc. of New York

&c &c

WASHINGTON MISSISSIPPI

1861

MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES
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INTRODUCTION

When the intelligence of the fall of General Covington at Chrystler's Field first reached his family, a brief obituary notice was published in the Natchez paper by a friend who promised at a future day a biography of the deceased. To this end he collected such material as would be useful in the undertaking, including many of the papers and the official correspondence of the General; but the calls of an arduous profession postponed, and a sudden and unexpected death, some years later, prevented, the fulfillment of this intention.

The papers in his hands, so essential to the proper performance of such an undertaking, perished afterwards in a fire which consumed his late residence, and one by one the friends and relatives who might in part have remedied this loss passed away and left the labor of affection and duty undone.

The public sentiment of the State, at length matured in reference to the necessity of rescuing the relics of our history, suggested the formation of an historical society as the best means of collecting and preserving the perishing memorials of our early times so full of interest to us and to our posterity. Such a society was accordingly incorporated by the State Legislature and the writer, honored by a prominent position in it, engaged to contribute from the stores of his memory, and the sources of information accessible to him, his part towards the fulfillment of the common undertaking of the members of the society. Among other tasks suggested in this connection, and urged upon the writer for fulfillment, was the preparation of this memoir.

Need more be said why or wherefore it was written; why this long neglected or postponed duty should have been now undertaken? If further prompting and other motive were wanting, a sufficient incentive may be found perhaps in the ties of consanguinity and the relations established by family connection.

B. L. C. WAILES.

MEMOIR OF LEONARD COVINGTON

Leonard Covington was born at Aquasco, his ancestral home on the Patuxent River, Prince George's County, Maryland, on the 30th of October, 1768. His great-grand-father, Levin Covington, is represented to have been a French Huguenot who emigrated to the Eastern Shore of Maryland before the close of the seventeenth century, where he married Margery Holliday, daughter of Col. Thomas Holliday of Somerset County, and subsequently established himself on an estate acquired on the Patuxent River in Prince George's County, comprised in part of an original grant made to Thomas Pagett by Lord Baltimore in 1695 and which, according to the description of the title deeds, was bounded in part by "the ancient lines of the Quarsico Manor," the original Indian name, it is presumed, of the place which is now known as "Aquasco." There at an early age he died in the family mansion erected in 1722, and there were born and lived his descendants for three generations.

The grandfather, Leonard Covington, also died young, about thirty years of age, and the father Levin Covington, did not attain to the age of forty years, each of them leaving only two children. Left at an early age to the care of a widowed mother*, Leonard Covington, the subject of this biography, and a younger brother, received a good English education and made such acquaintance with the classics as the local institutions of learning of that day could impart. Nurtured in the midst of our revolutionary struggle for independence, it is probable that the scenes by which he was surrounded may have given that direction to his ambition and inspired that love of country which devoted him to her defence and controlled his latter destiny. Among the earliest recollections of his childhood was the watching from an eminence at his home, commanding an extensive view down the Patuxent, the predatory parties of the British soldiery, who in their boat excursions were wont to ravage and plunder the estates bordering upon the river; the same point from which was witnessed the burning of the mansion of a near relative at Hallowing Point, opposite Benedict, by these marauders.

Arrived at manhood, his country firmly established under a free government and with prospect of a career of prosperity, Leonard Covington contracted an early marriage, to Susannah Somerville, October 22, 1789, and settled down upon his paternal acres in the avocation of a planter, that of his ancestors, with little expectation that the career upon which he had entered would be changed to one of strife and perilous adventure, and end in an early but glorious

* Nee Susannah Magruder.

death on a well fought and sanguinary field—such, however, was his destiny.

The early death of his wife and only child made a wreck of his domestic enjoyments and rendered distasteful for a time his rural pursuits.

An obstinate Indian war was now raging on the Western frontier. The treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States did not extend to the Indian allies of the former, several tribes of whom continued their hostilities to such an extent that between the years 1783 and 1790 more than fifteen hundred men, women and children of Kentucky alone had been killed or captured by them. An expedition commanded by General Harmar proved wholly unsuccessful in bringing the Wabash and Miami tribes to reasonable terms; a more formidable armament under Major General Arthur St. Clair was put in motion. The object of St. Clair's campaign was to establish a military post at the junction of the St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Rivers at what is now Fort Wayne in Indiana, with intermediate posts of communication between it and Fort Washington (Cincinnati), to awe and curb the Indians in that quarter as the only preventive of future hostility. Acting under his instructions, General St. Clair organized his army consisting of 2,300 regulars, exclusive of militia, built Fort Hamilton on the Great Miami and Fort Jefferson about forty miles further in advance, on the present limits of Darke County, Ohio. Entering upon the wilderness, the army reached a small branch of the Wabash River at the place now known as Fort Recovery and encamped on the night of the 3rd of November, 1791. Very early on the following morning they were unexpectedly attacked by a large body of Indians. The militia encamped in front were routed and falling back upon the main camp threw the whole body of troops into such disorder as could not be fully retrieved and after a desperate engagement of three hours they were completely routed with the loss of their camp equipage, all the artillery, consisting of seven pieces, and a great number killed, embracing a large proportion of officers, many of them of high rank. Strewing the road with their cast off arms and accoutrements, the survivors reached Fort Jefferson, a distance of twenty-seven miles, about dark. Resuming their retreat at 10:00 o'clock the same night, the shattered army returned to Fort Washington and there ended this most disastrous campaign. According to Indian usage, the wounded left on the battle field, including General Butler, were all slaughtered and barbarously mutilated, as were a large number of women who accompanied the army. The number who thus perished was very great; the killed and wounded together exceeded nine hundred.

To retrieve these disasters and put a stop to the encroachments and savage atrocities and to chastise the hostile tribes, who were

still exulting over their late triumph, General Antony Wayne was appointed to succeed General St. Clair and to raise and lead a new army into the hostile territory.

Seeking a share in the perils of this border warfare, Leonard Covington solicited and received from President Washington a commission of Coronet of Light Dragoons, dated 14th March 1792, four months after the slaughter of St. Clair's army. On the 17th of March, 1793, he was promoted to a Lieutenantcy, ranking from 25th October, 1792. ml

With all the activity that could be infused into the service, it was not until October, 1793, that the troops were raised, equipped and ready to take the field. The interval was employed by the President in new but fruitless attempts at pacification by treaty, and two gentlemen of high respectability, Col. Harden and Maj. Freeman, were barbarously murdered by the savages to whom they were sent on this peaceful mission. In December following General Wayne had advanced into the heart of the enemy's country and encamped his little army at Greenville, now the seat of Darke County, within twenty-three miles, or a day's march, of the scene of St. Clair's disaster. A detachment was sent forward and encamped on the battle ground on Christmas night. The next day the bones of those who were slaughtered there two years before, and not found and buried by the party previously sent for that purpose by General Wilkinson, were collected and interred, six hundred skulls being found among them. This melancholy duty performed, a fortification impregnable to savage force was erected on the ground, in which six of the guns lost in the battle were mounted, having been discovered where they were buried by the savages under piles of fallen timber. The remaining or seventh gun was not discovered until about the year 1835, when it came into the possession of a Volunteer Artillery Company in Cincinnati. This work was called Fort Recovery and a company of artillery and one of Riflemen were left for its defense.

Whilst the army of General Wayne was encamped at Greenville in the Summer of 1794, the site of St. Clair's battle became again the scene of a sanguinary affair in which the American troops, though severely handled, remained victorious and inflicted on the savage foe the heaviest loss sustained by them during the entire war. It was here that the subject of our memoir was first under fire of the enemy and attracted the favorable notice of his general. A detachment consisting of ninety riflemen and fifty dragoons, of whom Lieut. Covington was one, commanded by Major McMahon was sent from Greenville to escort a train of supplies for Fort Recovery where they were safely deposited in the Fort on the same evening, the detachment encamping without the walls.

On the next morning, the 30th of June, the detachment was attacked by a large body of Indians, among them a number of their British allies from Detroit, making altogether a force amounting to fifteen hundred or two thousand warriors, who at the same instant rushed on the detachment and assailed the Fort on every side with great fury. They were repulsed with a heavy loss but again rallied and renewed the attack, keeping up a heavy and constant fire the whole day, which was returned with spirit and effect by the Garrison. The succeeding night was dark and foggy, which the Indians profited by to remove their dead by torch light, at the same time it afforded an opportunity to the detachment of Major McMahon to enter the Fort, having been greatly exposed and suffered severely during the whole day. On the next morning the enemy renewed the attack on the Fort and continued it with great desperation during the day but were ultimately compelled to retreat from the same field on which they had been proudly victorious over the army of General St. Clair and with a loss twice as great as they had sustained on that occasion. The loss on both sides was very heavy; one third of Major McMahon's detachment fell; he was himself among the dead, shot through the head. Capt. Hartshorne, wounded by the savages, was killed in a conflict with Capt. McKee of the British Army, son of the British Indian Agent of that name of infamous notoriety in the war of 1812. Lieut. Covington greatly distinguished himself by his gallantry in this trying affair and had his horse killed under him.

In July, 1794, Wayne, having been joined by sixteen hundred mounted Kentuckians and General Scott, moved forward to Maumee. On the 8th of August he commenced the erection of Fort Defiance at the junction of the Auglassie with the Maumee. Without waiting to complete this work, the army was pressed onward to Roche de Boeuf where a slight work to secure his heavy baggage was thrown up which was called Fort Deposit. With the pause of a single day, the army resumed its march for the Rapids of the Maumee, where it was ascertained that the enemy in full force was encamped and had been lying in ambush for two days, at and around a hill called "Presque Isle" on the margin of the river about two miles above the present site of Maumee City, in Lucas County. The ground on which the battle of the "Fallen Timbers" was now to be fought was well chosen, being encumbered with prostrate trees, the result of a tornado, forming as it were an abatis as formidable as if specially designed to obstruct the movements of the army, which rendered much of the ground impracticable for the operation of Cavalry and afforded the enemy at the same time the most favorable covert for their mode of warfare. The Indian force, variously estimated at from fourteen hundred to two thousand, was formed in three lines within supporting distance from each other and extending nearly two miles at right angles with the river and chiefly in a close thick wood. It was

composed of Miamis, Potawatamies, Delawares, Shawnees, Chipewas, Ottawas and Senecas.

Blue Jacket (Weyapiersenwah), who more than two years before had repulsed the army of General Harmar and acquired much renown, exercised the chief command in the battle. He was associated in command with Little Turtle (Meshekenoghqua), a distinguished chief and councillor of the Miamis who had led the Indians at St. Clair's defeat and who participated actively in this engagement although it was determined upon in opposition to his advice. On the morning of August 20th, 1794, the advance guard of the army was checked by a severe fire from the enemy who were secreted in the woods and high grass. The plan of attack was promptly arranged. General Scott with the full force of mounted volunteers was directed to go on and turn the right flank of the enemy, and Capt. Campbell who commanded the legionary cavalry was ordered to turn the left next to the river.

With trailed arms the front line of the center attacked the hill, roused the enemy from their coverts at the points of their bayonets, delivered a close, well directed fire followed up by a charge so impetuous and irresistible that the Indians and the Canadian volunteers acting with them were routed and in less than half an hour driven from the hill and through the woods for more than two miles by less than half their number and before Generals Scott, Todd and Barbee, with every possible exertion, could bring up their mounted men to a position to participate in the action. The Legionary Cavalry, having in the meantime charged down the margin of the river, joined in the melee with the worsted foe with terrible effect, not however without severe loss; Capt. Campbell, who commanded the Cavalry, was killed and several other officers were picked off by the lurking savages. "Lieut. Covington, upon whom the command of the Cavalry now devolved, cut down two savages with his own hand in turning the enemy's left flank." In the hand to hand encounter with savages on such a field, the Cavalry were exposed to a very unequal conflict and could be often singled out and assailed with impunity by the lurking foe. When all the officers of intermediate rank had fallen and Capt. Campbell was in the act of delivering an order to the Lieutenant, now his second in rank, an Indian, springing from his covert and advancing to within a few paces, leveled his pistol and shot the former down. It is scarcely necessary to say that this was one of the savages who fell by the hand of Lieut. Covington, as stated in General Wayne's report. A few bounds of his horse placed him by the side of the savage warrior when with his reeking "Potter's Sabre," now an heirloom in the family, he avenged the fall of his commander, and a cloven skull added one more to the slain on the ensanguined field.

The fury of his charge through the woods caused General Wayne

to be termed "The Wind" by the Indians, who compared his impetuous rush to a tornado which swept everything before it. The loss of our army was very considerable but that of the Indians was greater, the woods being strewn for a considerable distance with their dead bodies and those of their auxiliaries, the latter armed with British muskets and bayonets. Previous to the battle the Indians were equipped and furnished with rations from Fort Miami, a large and strongly fortified work built by the British the previous Spring, and were cheered on to the conflict; at the close of the engagement they found themselves vanquished and flying to the protection of its walls, which were now closed against them with apparent unconcern at their rout and slaughter. Thus ended the battle of the "Fallen Timbers," which terminated the Indian hostilities in that quarter. The victorious General, having over-run the whole country above and below the Fort, completed Fort Defiance and erected other posts, establishing his headquarters at Greenville. Here more than eleven hundred warriors headed by their Chiefs repaired bearing the olive branch. Resisting all the incentives held out by McKee and other British agents and emissaries to continue the war, their determination to sue for peace could not be shaken; the utmost that could be accomplished was to delay for a time the negotiations, which resulted in concluding a treaty of peace and unity with the United States on the 3rd of August, 1795, known as the Treaty of Greenville. This pacification of Indian hostilities hastened to a conclusion the long pending negotiations with Great Britain by which Fort Miami and other posts erected by the English within our territory were evacuated,* thus ensuring peace and repose to the country for many years.

The army, no longer needed for offensive warfare, was reduced, and Leonard Covington resigned his commission on the 12th day of September, 1795, and retired from the service with rank of Captain, to which he had been promoted by a commission from President Washington, dated July 1st, 1795, ranking from June, 1794. Returning to his agricultural pursuits, on the 29th of March, 1796, he formed a second matrimonial connection, the lady of his choice being his cousin, Rebecca Mackall, of Hallowing Point, Calvert County, who became the mother of several children and survived him about twelve years.

Although always an ardent and active politician, for many years he remained in the bosom of his family devoted to his private occupations. Resisting the allurements of public life, he declined a Seat in the Senate of his native State, to which he was elected in November, 1802. Yielding subsequently to the wishes of his friends, he was elected a member of the 9th Congress in 1805 and held his seat

* The Jay Treaty.

in that body as representative from his State until 1807. On the 11th of November of the same year, he was transferred by unanimous election to the Senate of the State. The matters which occupied Congress at that period, and in which he took a part, are matters of national history and a very brief notice of his political career will suffice.

A Jeffersonian Republican in politics, he was found acting with Nathaniel Macon, Epps, Campbell, Mason and other distinguished men of the party. The first message from the President* was decidedly warlike and designed to prepare the public mind for the struggle which was evidently impending and which all pacific expedients only sufficed to postpone for a few years. Besides the aggressions of England on our commerce, our relations with Spain were in a very unsatisfactory state. The adjustment of the disputed boundary of Louisiana and the acquisition of Florida were measures of the first moment and attended with difficulties scarcely susceptible of a peaceful solution. These and questions of like import, contrary to the usage of the present day, were discussed with closed doors, a mode of proceeding in secret conclave which met with much opposition. On the question of warlike preparation, Leonard Covington was opposed to the creation of a standing army, his military experience having satisfied him that the volunteer militia were more reliable than the raw recruits of the regular army and required no greater disciplining and training to render them quite as efficient in service. The prospect of a rupture with England becoming more imminent, in 1808 an increase of the army was determined on and embraced the reorganization of the Regiment of Light Dragoons. On the 9th of January 1809, the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel of that regiment was, without solicitation or expectation, tendered him.

Surrounded by a young and growing family whose welfare required his utmost solicitude and appreciating the repugnance of a devoted wife to lead her little charge through privations, exposures and vicissitudes incident to a soldier's life, faced with abandoning the comforts and enjoyments of a paternal home which had sheltered them and their ancestors for four generations and severing the attachments and associations connected with it perhaps forever, these furnished grave subjects for reflection and demanded the most mature consideration. It could not be disputed, however, that the appointment was one highly honorable and the manner in which it was conferred peculiarly flattering. He had left the army as the Senior Officer of the Cavalry Force of the United States and when that department of the army was reorganized it was natural for the government to look to the surviving officers of that corps and to

* Jefferson.

tender this honor to one who had in the spring of his manhood so distinguished himself. His country now, with an impending war, required his experience and services and he felt that he would be dishonored in declining the post of danger and of usefulness.

Consigning his estate to the charge of an agent and gathering his little family together, he embarked in obedience to orders and in discharge of his duties for our then remote frontier, the Mississippi Territory. Inspecting the garrisons at Newport, Fort Massac and other military posts in descending the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, he arrived in January, 1810, at the Cantonment at Washington, then the seat of the Territorial Government. Having purchased a country residence, which from its convenience and nearness to the Cantonment, the seat of his immediate military duties, he called "Propinquity," he there established his little family in security and a reasonable amount of comfort. He was, however, not long permitted to enjoy in this retreat the happiness of their society, the demands of the service calling him repeatedly to command at different and distant posts. On June, 1st, 1810, he was promoted to the full command of the Regiment of Light Dragoons, the whole cavalry force then in the service, to take rank from 15th February, 1809.

At that period, the Province of West Florida was a possession of Spain, and a point on the Mississippi River near the line of demarkation between the two governments, the 31st degree of North latitude, known then as Loftus Heights, had been fortified in 1798 by our troops soon after the evacuation of Natchez by the Spandiards and was called Fort Adams. Stationed in command of this garrison, Col. Covington was during the summer and fall of 1810 an observant and interested spectator of some stirring political events transpiring in his immediate vicinity, which led to important results. The inhabitants of the adjoining province of West Florida having revolted, the insurgents took possession of Baton Rouge, the headquarters of the Spanish Government, and of the commandant, Carlos Dehault Delassus, called a convention, formed a government, adopted ordinances and chose Fulwar Skipwith their chief executive. Governor Skipwith had been Secretary to Mr. Monroe when French Minister and subsequently (in 1795) was Consul General of the United States to France. Since his recall, years before, he had settled in West Florida. A large portion of the inhabitants of the province were emigrants from the different States of the Union, American or English by birth, well affected to our government and desirous of participating in our free institutions.

It was their purpose only to hold possession of the country until it could be surrendered to the United States. However, smitten with the charms of power and influenced by other considerations of personal interest, the constituted government seemed to covet a longer lease of authority, and sought recognition accordingly as an inde-

pendent State. Menaced, however, with an attack from Mobile, still held by the Spandiards, an application was made through Governor Holmes of the Mississippi Territory for aid and recognition by the United States Government, claiming at the same time all the unlocated lands and stipulating for an immediate loan of \$100,000, with other favors and indulgences. The President chose to take a different view of the matter. Regarding that part of West Florida as appertaining by right to the United States, remaining in the possession of Spain only through motives of conciliation, awaiting the result of negotiations for its actual delivery, he did not hesitate to direct the occupancy of that part of the Territory west of the river Perdido to which the title of the United States extended, and for which the laws provided for the Territory of Orleans were adapted. Wm. C. C. Claiborne, the Governor of that Territory, being in Washington, "was dispatched posthaste" to take possession and authorized to call upon the regular troops on the Mississippi and the Militia of the two Territories if necessary. On his passage through the Mississippi Territory, he called upon Governor Holmes, who furnished him with a detachment of militia, composed in part of a volunteer troop of cavalry. At the head of this force he repaired to St. Francisville, where he raised the flag of the United States in token of possession. About the same time Col. Covington, upon the requisition of Gov. Claiborne, descended the Mississippi with a detachment of his command and on the 10th of December, 1810, landed at Baton Rouge and took possession of the Fortress at that place, the surrender being made without hostile encounter—reluctantly, however, and not without meditated resistance. After reporting to the Secretary of War his occupancy of the Post and sending him a schedule of the armanent and military stores found in the Garrison, he remarks in a private letter to his brother:

"You will be surprised to hear that there was a great reluctance in certain Official Folks in this Country to relinquish the Province and Garrison to the troops of the United States. We had made preparations and fully expected to have taken possession sword in hand, but the good management of our Governors, (Claiborne and Holmes) prevented the effusion of blood and the evils that would have resulted from hostile operations."

The Military etiquette observed on this occasion and the manner of taking possession had a most imposing effect upon the inhabitants and spectators of the scene.

In March, 1811, Col. Covington was ordered to Fort Stoddard, a military post on the Alabama River only accessible by a land journey of some twelve days from the Cantonment at Washington, through an unsettled and wilderness country or by water through the Spanish possessions by way of Mobile. Here on the 25th of March he assumed the command of the Garrison and, in obedience

to general orders, it became his unpleasant duty to place his friend, the old Revolutionary Veteran, Col. Cushing, under arrest and send him to Baton Rouge for trial, on charges preferred by General Hampton. In writing to a friend at this time he mentions that,

"Governor Matthews of Georgia and Col. John McKee are here in the capacity of commissioners from our Government and are in secret negotiations with the Spanish authorities with reference to new acquisitions and establishments and **** you need not be surprised to hear of me in Pensacola or Mobile."

General Hampton, who had succeeded General Wilkinson in command of the forces in the southwest, now withdrew and devolved the command upon Col. Covington. His final instructions, dated the 9th of May, 1811, informed him that an additional company of dismounted Dragoons and a company of riflemen were ordered from the Cantonment at Washington to Pass Christian, and that the disposable force of Col. Constant was subject to his orders, "to meet the wants on the extensive frontier confided to your particular command," and to fulfill the intentions of the Government, which were explained in a copy of the orders from the War Department furnished for his information and guide. The expectation of active military service which this command excited soon subsided and within the same month he writes that, "all hopes of gathering laurels for the present have vanished."

In July following, however, there was a slight gleam of war on the horizon, Commodore Bainbridge with ten gun boats was lying off Mobile, with a transport of ammunition and supplies for Fort Stoddard. Frequent messages were sent him by the Spanish Commander that his vessels would be fired upon if they attempted to pass, but these threats were disregarded and the transports, convoyed by one of the gun boats, passed on and arrived at the Fort without molestation. "The affair terminated by an invitation to our officers to dine with the Dons, which was accepted, and thus again the war ended." The monotonous routine of duty in this secluded spot became exceedingly irksome, with no speedy prospect of active service, still he was confined there until the latter part of the year, chafing and restless at his life of seclusion and inactivity.

On the 20th of March, 1812, Col. Covington was called to Baton Rouge as President of a Court Martial for the trial of Col. Cushing of the 2nd Regiment of Infantry on charges preferred by General Wade Hampton. Various causes protracted the term of the Court to the 5th of May. The finding of the Court, though not entirely satisfactory to the General, was confirmed, with a compliment upon the "respectability, rank and intelligence" of its members, by general orders dated the 9th at his headquarters, his plantation at Houmas. A report of this case was afterwards published by Capt. Winfield Scott, who acted as Judge Advocate at the trial.

In April, 1812, General Wilkinson was ordered to resume the command of the troops in the Territory of Orleans and Mississippi. He arrived in New Orleans on the 9th of July, where he was met by a dispatch from the Secretary of War, announcing the declaration of war with Great Britain and directing him to take such measures as that event should in his judgment require. A council of war was held in New Orleans on the 4th of August, when, after considering the measures recommended, it was determined to "employ the troops of the line at Pass Christian and hold them in readiness for prompt and active operations to the East and to the West, offensive and defensive, as might be required."

Col. Covington was charged with the command of this now important post; on the 26th of September, he writes "my duties leave me but little leisure, but are of a kind not to be irksome; all our forces from Mississippi are concentrating at this point and an anxious eye is cast towards Mobile and Pensacola." His duties also called him to Fort St. Philip below the English Turn on the Mississippi, where operations for strengthening the fortifications were progressing. At last, (on the 14th of March, 1813) General Wilkinson was ordered by General Armstrong, Secretary of War, to take possession of the country west of the Perdido and particularly the town and fortress of Mobile. A detachment of his forces under his command, supported by the Naval force under Commodore Shaw, made a rapid, and to the Spaniards, unexpected descent upon Fort Charlotte at Mobile, which was surrendered by the Commandant, Cayetano Perez, together with the artillery and munitions of war, by convention entered into on the 13th of April. This expedition was conducted in a manner that gave much satisfaction to the Secretary of War, as expressed in his dispatch of the 22nd of May, but the General was directed to "await further orders." Returning to New Orleans, General Wilkinson found orders commanding him to repair to our northern frontier, and Col. Covington was also ordered to join the army operating upon the borders of Canada. Here was exhibited some of the mismanagement of an incompetent and blundering administration which characterized the whole war; Covington and others of similar rank and merit who by service of several years had become well acquainted with the topography and resources of the country and its means of defense, and to whom its safety and protection might most wisely have been committed, were suddenly hurried off some two thousand miles or more to the extreme north to a department with which they were little familiar and where their knowledge and experience were necessarily neutralized, overshadowed and eclipsed, as it were, by the superior rank of a batch of mushroom Generals, taken from the ranks of civil life and set over them to satisfy the exigencies of political requirement and as the reward of party subserviency. Clever as may have been some

of those who supplied their places in the Southwestern department, eminent as some of them were as Civilians and Councilors, a short period proved them to be inexperienced and unqualified for military command.*

Taking leave of his family, Col. Covington left his home on the 13th of May, 1813, and entered upon a long and fatiguing journey on horse back to the seat of government, a large portion of the route through a wilderness country occupied by Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. On his arrival at Washington he found the aspect of public affairs very gloomy, the friends of the administration despondent and dejected, and the President* confined to his apartments with sickness attributed to disappointment and mortification. Reporting himself to the Secretary of War, he received orders to join his regiment at Sacketts Harbor, where he arrived on the 28th of July. "With a command inadequate to his rank, placed in a perilous and responsible situation with little hope of doing credit to himself or rendering service to his country, controlled as he was by some newly created and inexperienced young Generals," the position in which he found himself was most vexatious and annoying. To appreciate his feelings and those of many others of like rank and standing in the army, it will not be amiss at this day to recur to the prevailing sentiment and expectation of the people of the United States at the commencement of the War of 1812.

As if by common consent they expected to see our gallant little Navy succumb to the overwhelming superiority of the "Mistress of the Seas" and that it would be swept from the Ocean; that seemed to be regarded as one of the inevitable results of the War for which the Nation should be prepared. But for the Army they looked for a continued series of triumphs and successes and victory was everywhere to perch on its banners. The Canadas overrun were to have been an early and easy prey to our arms and, despoiled of her provinces, the enemy was to have been utterly humbled and subdued.

Yet so far the reverse was the case—the Navy had everywhere been victorious and covered itself with glory, and on the other hand, upon the land we had experienced little more than a series of disasters. The War had not existed three months when General Van Rensselaer with solicitude for his own reputation and for the honor of his country had occasion to use this emphatic language in a letter to General Dearborn, chief in command:

"One army has surrendered in disgrace and another has but little more than escaped; the national character is degraded and the disgrace will remain corroding the public feeling and spirit until another campaign, unless it be instantly wiped away by the brilliant close of this."

* Madison.

How galling was such reflection to those officers who had before seen service and gained renown; with what desperation were they prepared, if the opportunity was afforded them, to wipe off this stigma so humiliating to honorable pride and ambition; and by none of those who joined the northern army at this time was this more bitterly or keenly felt than by the subject of this memoir. It was this rankling feeling of reflected disgrace that forced Van Rensselaer, the comrade of Covington in Wayne's campaign, into the unequal, desperate but successful campaign at Queenstown, where he made himself a target to be riddled by the enemy's balls; that led Covington and Swartwout to expose themselves recklessly **** and prompted many others to acts of personal gallantry and daring which too often only led to death without distinction or glory.

A plan for the reduction of Upper Canada had been formed by General Armstrong, the Secretary of War, and approved by the President and his Cabinet and, General Dearborn having been superseded on account of his advanced years and infirm health, General Wilkinson, from whose former services and military experience much was expected, was chosen to carry it into effect, and it was expected that the successful execution of the enterprise, if it did not wholly wipe out all the previous disgrace of our arms, would at least cover with glory those who planned it. Shortly after his arrival at Sacketts Harbor, Colonel Covington received a commission of Brigadier General, to which he was nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, Sunday the 1st of August, 1813, that body from the urgency of public affairs being in session on that day. Assuming this command, he employed himself assiduously in preparing his brigade for service in the approaching campaign.

It was not the expectation of the administration that any movement would be made by the troops until we had obtained command of the lakes. Commodore Chauncey had been in pursuit of Sir James Yeo, the commander of the British fleet on Lake Ontario, and had chased his squadron into several places of security whenever he ventured out into the Lake but had not been able to bring him to a general engagement. As yet, therefore, not only the place of rendezvous, but whether Kingston or Montreal should be the point of attack, was undetermined. General Wilkinson after his arrival at Sacketts Harbor and assuming the command, submitted to a council of war, on the 26th of August, at which Generals Lewis, Brown and Swartwout and Commodore Chauncey were present,* the wishes of the Government, and suggested several plans of operation. Council decided that it was not necessary to await the result of a conflict

* Dr. Franklin B. Hough's History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, New York, mentions a Council of War "near Hamilton" in which General Covington participated and records his opinion as well as the opinions of the other officers.

between the hostile squadrons, as the operations of the army would not depend upon a co-operation of the fleet, further than to secure a passage of the troops into the St. Lawrence, and that the troops should be rendezvoused at Grenadier Island near Sacketts Harbor, pass down the St. Lawrence, unite with Hampton's division, and take Montreal.

The reasons which governed the Council in coming to a decision adverse to the known preference of both the Secretary of War and the commanding General for making a direct attack on Kingston, are not on record, but may be inferred from the following written opinion of General Covington, who was not personally present at the deliberations of the Council,* a copy of which was found among his papers after his death:

"Plan of operations with reasons pro and con.

If we attack Kingston, we shall have to encounter the British fleet too; we shall have to meet the uncertainty of the wind and waves in bad transports on broad water; we shall have to act without the aid of General Hampton's army and subsequently with not more than 6,500. If we attack Montreal, there will be no fleet to aid the land troops of the British, and we shall have the aid of more than 3,000 troops under General Hampton's command; we shall have a narrow water over which to keep up our supplies, etc, etc."

The troops counted on for the expedition were widely scattered; they were those at Sacketts Harbor, Fort George, Niagara, Oswego and the command of General Hampton at Burlington on Lake Champlain. The season was rapidly advancing and but little time remained before the closing in of winter. Leaving General Brown's command at Sacketts Harbor, General Wilkinson set about assembling his forces, providing transportation and supplies and, as it were, commencing, near the close of August, those preparations which should have been made in great part in May. He found the troops composing his command suffering with disease in an unusual degree; and his own exposure in an open boat night after night in inclement weather, between Sacketts Harbor and Fort George, brought on an attack of Lake Fever which accompanied him, with brief intermissions, during the whole campaign, reducing him in his advanced age to a state of health such as to unfit him for the active and arduous duties he was called upon to perform and at the most trying and critical period laying him helpless and prostrate on his bed. The transports provided were frail, insufficient and crowded and the elements exceedingly unpropitious. The coast between Fort George and Henderson's Bay became in consequence a scene of scattered and stranded boats, battered or wholly wrecked; the troops, many of them recently transferred from a more genial clime, sick

* See Footnote on previous page.

or convalescent, were exposed to the pitiless pelting of a northern tempest, mingling snow and sleet with torrents of rain and coming with unbroken force and piercing keenness over the wide expanse of the Lake.

All of the troops at last being under way and the larger portion of them assembled at and near Sacketts Harbor, General Wilkinson reached the place on the 4th; and, Commodore Chauncey coming in with his fleet on the 6th of October, under the protection it afforded, it was now deemed safe to commence the embarkation for Grenadier Island, distant eighteen miles off an exposed and dangerous coast.

It having become necessary to reconstruct the different brigades to form one for General Swartwout, the following order was issued:

"Headquarters, Sacketts Harbor, Oct. 9th, 1813.

The army is formed into four Brigades and a reserve; the first composed of the 5th, 13th and 12th regiments under Brig. General Boyd, the second of the 6th, 22nd and 15th regiments under General Brown; the third of the 9th, 25th and 16th regiments under Brig. General Covington, and the fourth of the 11th, 21st and 14th under Brig. General Swartwout. The reserve under Col. McComb is composed of his own regiment and the detachment ordered to join him. This corps, the dragoons and rifle corps, will be disposed of as circumstances may render necessary under the special orders of the General. The artillery has been distributed and will be posted by Brig. General Porter. In the formation of the brigades, all the regiments have not their proper stations, but gentlemen must excuse this irregularity, as it was unavoidable from the disparity in the strength of Corps. Major Herkimer with his volunteers will join Col. McComb and receive his orders.

By Order of Major General Wilkinson.
J. DeB. Walbach, Adjt. General."

Now on the point of sailing the question as to the distribution of the Flotilla came again into discussion between the Secretary of War and the General. The Secretary had been understood to have come over warmly to the decision of the general officers of the 26th of August; as to the opinion of General Wilkinson, it was thought to be adverse; both seemed now to vacillate in their views and these seemed fated to be always opposed. The General was now vehement against the attack on Kingston, because if successful in itself, with all its advantages, it would defeat the chief object of the campaign, the capture of Montreal. The Secretary was greatly in favor of giving a passing brush, which he thought need not consume a single day; but as circumstances which the Secretary counted in our favor might change, he thought the only safe termination would be, that if the British fleet, which it had been calculated Commodore Chauncey was to keep shut up at the head of the Lake, should not escape and get into Kingston Harbor and the Garrison at the place not be largely reinforced, and if the winds should be such as to allow the

navigation of the Lake securely, Kingston should be our first object; otherwise we should go direct to Montreal. Now, none of these contingencies turned up in our favor; the British fleet had entered Kingston Harbor; the British troops before Fort George had broken up that position and gone to reinforce the Garrison at Kingston with 1,500 effective men, and, as will be seen, the elements were as little in our favor; it was obvious that the descent on Montreal only could now be the object of the expedition. From the time of the arrival of General Wilkinson, for about fifteen days, a tempest raged with the wildest fury and almost without intermission; troops were embarked and disembarked. Deluded by some short deceptive calm, detachment succeeding detachment put out upon the Lake to be overtaken and stranded by a sudden squall, often lengthened into a settled gale, rendering the passage which should have been one of a few hours, one of as many days. Scarcely a detachment escaped damage and many boats containing valuable stores, artillery, etc., were lost. The embarkation of General Covington's brigade from Horse Island, about two miles south of Sacketts Harbor, was countermanded by order of General Lewis on the 17th of October, but he appears to have gotten off on the following day, not however with better fortune than the others, losing several of his boats and a few lives.

Such were the confusion and disaster attendant upon this unfortunate military affair, the transport of the troops to Grenadier Island, that many of the prominent and important details of the movement can never now be known. The Island seems to have been uninhabited and without buildings or other shelter. A part of the army was for a longer or shorter period encamped upon it, refitting wrecked boats and collecting scattered cargoes, including among the rest the perishable yet indispensable hospital stores, which were piled upon the beach without adequate protection from the weather and exposed to other waste.

On the 24th of October we find General Wilkinson at anchor on the *Lady of the Lake* off Grenadier Island bewailing the inexorable winds and waves that retarded the arrival of the batteaux which were dropping in so slowly as to require his return to the Harbor to hasten them up. On the following day he landed on the Island and took measures to seize every pause of the prevailing storm to slip the Flotilla into the St. Lawrence by small detachments, but it was found impossible in these brief and deceptive calms.

November 1st the General was still on the Island. Nearly two hundred sick, sent back to the Hospital at Sacketts Harbor in substantial comfortable boats, were driven on shore by the storm, which continued with such violence all night that no exertion could relieve; fortunately only three perished in consequence.

On this day, General Brown's brigade, provided with larger and

more substantial boats than the others, together with the artillery, riflemen and gun boats, made French Creek, the first place of general rendezvous in the St. Lawrence, and Generals Covington and Boyd followed the same day, but in consequence of the infirmity of their transports and the boisterous state of the weather were compelled to put back.

The advanced detachment of our army encamped at French Creek, a stream putting into a small bay in the St. Lawrence within view of the Canada shore, affording a good landing and deep water and opposite the point by which our army was expected to have approached Kingston. Being discovered by the enemy, ever vigilant and watchful, two brigs, two schooners and several gun boats from Kingston dropped down to a convenient distance and opened a fire upon our vessels half an hour before sunset. Major Eustis having landed three eighteen pounders, which by a provident foresight had been embarked ready mounted on scows built for the purpose, Capt. McPherson, in command of these pieces, returned the fire, which was kept up with spirit and effect until dark when the enemy retired down the river. During the night a furnace was constructed and when the enemy renewed the attack next morning they were plied with red hot shot, and, one of the vessels being several times set on fire, the British with some difficulty withdrew from the fight through the North Channel to Kingston a few hours before Commodore Chauncey's fleet hove into sight. Two days later the Flotilla was united and all of the troops, with the exception of Col. Randolph's command, which arrived the next morning, were encamped at French Creek. The following day was occupied in the preparation of long steering oars to guide the batteaux through the rapids and in making final arrangements for the order of sailing and in distributing flags and diagrams to regulate the movements of the Flotilla. On the 5th, a clear and beautiful day, the troops, embarked in more than three hundred boats, were at last under way. "Stretching along for miles, scattered in groups amid the Thousand Isles, now swallowed up in the silent forests that clothed the banks, again drifting by scattered settlements or shooting the long and dangerous rapids," this novel and imposing flotilla presented a strange and picturesque appearance as it swept onward down the St. Lawrence.

The Flotilla landed below Morrisville, seven miles above Prescott, which it was intended to have passed that night, it being a fortified commanding position and provided with ample means of harassing, if not arresting, the expedition, but some confusion in the movements of the Flotilla and the lateness of the hour prevented. On the following morning the boats dropped down to a point within three miles of Prescott. Here the troops debarked, except so many as were necessary to manage the boats; the ammunition was also

landed and placed in carts to secure it from the hazard of the enemy's fire.

The position of the enemy being reconnoitered by the General in the meantime and the necessary arrangements made, the troops passed down by land under cover of the night to a bay two miles below Prescott, and General Brown as officer of the day followed with the boats about two o'clock in the morning, after the moon had gone down, the better to conceal their movements. Major Eustis was posted for the protection of the Flotilla with eight gun boats in the channel, opposite the batteries of the enemy. The movement was conducted with the "greatest regularity, precision and silence and although discovered before half the fleet had passed, and having to sustain the cannonading of the enemy for three hours, not one boat out of three hundred was hit; one man only was killed and two wounded."

Here occurred one of those unexpected delays which were destined in the end to prove disastrous to the expedition. In passing Prescott, two of the largest vessels loaded with provisions, artillery and ordnance stores, either from cowardice or treachery, had been run into a creek on the opposite side near Ogdensburg. Upon these the enemy kept up so constant a cannonade that it was with much difficulty they were recovered by Col. Ripley, who was sent back with his regiment for that purpose, and the whole day was thus consumed. Col. McComb, however, had been sent forward with the Elite Corps of about twelve hundred men and had some skirmishing with the Canadian militia who were now found to be in arms at the narrow passes and commanding points on the river with muskets and some pieces of artillery. A party of these he routed some two miles below and Major Eustis with a few of the light gun barges maintained a cannonade against some pieces of horse artillery, which charged down the bank of the river in full gallop and fired several shots at General Wilkinson's schooner. The cavalry, about 500 strong, which had proceeded by land on the American side of the River, were now assembled at a narrow pass of the St. Lawrence near the "Whitehouse," where they were joined on the morning of the 8th by the Flotilla, and by means of the artillery scows were crossed over to the Canada side, together with about two hundred horses intended for the artillery brought down from Sacketts Harbor. It was the best place on the river for crossing, being narrow, about 500 yards wide, and having an eddy on each side which was very favorable, yet the whole day and the following night were consumed in this ferriage. In the morning after arriving at this place, General Brown was ordered to reinforce Col. McComb with his brigade and to take the command, and it was ascertained in the course of the day that a thousand or fifteen hundred men from Kingston had landed at Prescott and, being reinforced by the troops of the

latter place, were in pursuit of the expedition in batteaux, accompanied by seven gun boats. It was reported that the militia of Upper Canada were out and would dispute the narrow passes below, which proved to be the fact.

Early in the morning of the 9th some skirmishing took place between our riflemen and some Canadian militia and Indians which were hanging on our rear and were beaten back. The cavalry and four pieces of artillery under command of Capt. McPherson were attached to the command of General Brown, who was ordered to advance and clear the coast below as far as the head of Longue Sault. The rapidity of the current now was such as to make it necessary to halt the Flotilla several hours to enable General Brown to make good his march in time to cover the movement of the boats. After 3 P. M. the Flotilla got under way and floated down to Williamsburg near Chrystler's Field, fifteen miles below the Whitehouse, and encamped for the night.

On the 10th of November the 2nd Dragoons and two pieces of Artillery were detached from General Brown's command and he proceeded at daybreak with the residue of his detachment of yesterday to remove any obstructions to the passage of the Flotilla down the Longue Sault, a dangerous rapid extending nearly nine miles, with a velocity of about twelve miles an hour, on which, in case of attack, it would have been impracticable to land the boats or make adequate resistance. To lighten the boats part of the remaining brigades were landed and under the command of General Boyd were charged with preventing an attack from the enemy hanging upon the rear, and if such an attack should be made were to turn about and beat him back. It was designed that the expedition should reach Barnhart's by night, but before getting under way the enemy was seen advancing upon our rear and their galleys and gun boats approached our Flotilla lying at the shore and opened a cannonade upon it which obliged our vessels to drop down. Here again the mounted eighteen pounders did good service, and, being landed, a single shot compelled the enemy's vessels to withdraw up the river accompanied by their troops.

General Wilkinson was confined to his bed, extremely sick, and in the afternoon directed General Lewis to assume the command. The latter was consequently occupied on the shore until a late hour with the disposition of the troops for the night, and in reconnoitering the enemy of the force and disposition of whom but little could be learned, being posted in the woods and concealed by the nature of the ground. From the best information that could be obtained the general opinion was that the enemy was not in sufficient force to obstruct the advance of the troops. These slight operations and the time consumed in disembarking and re-embarking the heavy guns so far wasted the day that the pilots were afraid to enter the Sault

with the Flotilla at so late an hour; it therefore fell down but a short distance and the army halted not more than two miles from the previous night's encampment; where as a matter of precaution the troops lay on their arms, though it rained heavily all night.

Drenched with the rain, the troops rose unrefreshed from a cold, wet bed on the fatal eleventh of November and prepared to resume their march down the St. Lawrence. General Swartwout's command had proceeded some half a mile when the demonstrations of the enemy in the rear and the absence of intelligence of General Brown, (who from the firing heard the previous day, was supposed to have engaged the enemy) caused that detachment to be recalled and the further movement of the Flotilla to be arrested. Col. Bissell was dispatched with his regiment early in the morning to dislodge a body of the enemy ascertained to have posted themselves on an inland at the pitch of the Sault, which in due time was accomplished.

General Lewis being now too ill to leave his bed in consequence of his exposure to the rain the previous evening, General Wilkinson resumed the command and dictated several orders from his pallet on board his vessel during the day, although so seriously indisposed that some of those calling were denied access to him by his staff. These were untoward circumstances for any army to be placed in on the eve of a battle, and conscious that they were to be led by a new and inexperienced General who only "happened to be the Senior Officer on the ground" and entitled to command. The galley and gun boats commanded by Capt. Mulcaster of the British Navy again dropped down below a point in the river and menaced the Flotilla but the battery of eighteen pounders was brought to bear upon them and a few shots induced them to retire. Still the troops of the enemy on shore had but partially shown themselves and the entire forenoon passed in marching and counter-marching to ascertain their strength and position and to fathom their designs, and whilst thus engaged the troops encountered a violent storm which lasted from twelve to near two o'clock.

In the mean time intelligence arrived that General Brown had defeated a large body of militia under Col. Dennis of the British regulars at a Block House below and had proceeded down the Sault. The Flotilla was now about to proceed, when a report was brought to the Commander-in-Chief that the enemy was advancing in column, which however was unfounded; but conjecturing that the attack was only delayed until our troops had resumed their march and the boats got under way, when it could be made to the greatest advantage, to anticipate such a movement, Col. Swift was sent to General Boyd to instruct him to advance upon the enemy. The already wearied troops who had now been under arms for nearly forty-eight hours, were put in motion and the battle soon ensued.

The versions of this engagement are so many and so various that it is necessary to collate the different accounts and compare the authorities to arrive at a true estimate of its character, its merits and its results. The British troops were led by Lieut. Col. Morrison of the 89th regiment and were said to be composed of detachments of the 49th, 89th and 104th Regiments, together with the Glengary Fencibles, Canadian Volunteers and Indians, amounting probably to sixteen hundred men, exclusive of the Indians and the force on board the vessels, chiefly artillerists who did good service during the battle. Besides the ordnance on board the vessels, the enemy had pieces in the field. Our force was unquestionably greater; it consisted of those parts of the Brigades of Generals Boyd, Covington and Swartwout disembarked on the 10th to lighten the boats and not detached on other service, part of the 2nd Dragoons, which however were unable to act with advantage on account of the ravines which cut up the field, and four pieces of artillery which, having to be landed from the boats, came late into the action, also a reserve corps of about four hundred of Col. Upham's regiment, which arrived about the close of the battle and were only partially engaged. Neither Covington nor Swartwout was obliged to have taken a part in the action with this detachment, yet both entered the field, each taking command of that part of it which belonged to his respective brigade.

The main incidents of the action are not to be obtained from any report of the prominent actors in the affair or in the details of any of our historians, but must be culled out and made up from them all, so far as they do not conflict and are sustained and corroborated by authenticated facts and verbal statements known to have been made by participants in the battle. These incidents so far as they are clearly authenticated and relate to the general order and conduct of the action and the participation of General Covington in it, his heroism and fall, will here be presented in the language of those who witnessed his gallantry and bore testimony to his worth.

Of the commencement and prosecution of the battle General Swartwout states that the main body of the army formed near the place of encampment within four hundred yards of the boats and as near them as the nature of the ground would permit; after the action the boats were sent several hundred yards down the river for safety. The enemy were driven back about a mile and a half to their strong ground where they had a reserve of seven hundred men who had not been engaged, and our troops after fighting them two hours and a half retired and formed in order of battle on nearly the same ground they occupied the last night. During the action, part of his brigade having expended their ammunition, they retired to a ravine where they were replenished and again joined the action.

"My orders," says General Boyd "were, should the enemy advance upon us to beat them back. They first attacked us in the woods; we drove them from there into the plain, from the plain to a ravine where their main body was posted and from there into an open space interspersed with smaller ravines enfiladed and raked by their gun boats. We then drove them to where their right was protected by their gunboats and their left on a wood lined with incorporated militia and Indians. The operations of the army during the action were annoyed by shot and shrapnel shells thrown from the latter.

The field of battle was so situated as to allow considerable execution from the boats and our army felt the effects. It was well ascertained that the number of boats amounted to nine and there must have been at least one gun to each. Our loss in the action was three hundred and thirty-nine killed and wounded. A few prisoners were taken from the British.

Considering my orders to have been executed and some of our troops giving away, I ordered the main body to fall back and reform where the action first commenced."

General Ripley, late Colonel of the 21st Regiment, stated in his testimony before the Court Martial at Troy for the trial of General Wilkinson that at the battle of Chrystler's Field, his impression was that there was an error somewhere. His regiment formed the advance and he had no idea of encountering any enemy but the militia and a few regulars who had been hovering about them the day previous. The first intimation he had to the contrary was on encountering within half a musket shot a body of regulars who rose from a ravine where they had been concealed. In the early part of the action there appeared to be a perfect concert between General Covington's Brigade and his regiment, but no concert with the First Brigade. The battle he considered was a drawn one and he attributed it in part to the fall of General Covington at a moment when he was gallantly leading his column to carry the enemy's Artillery. By his fall a partial confusion was produced in his Brigade. Another cause of the failure was the first Brigade not following Covington's and the Artillery not being brought into action until too late.

Thompson, in his historial sketch of the late war with Great Britain in 1812, states in his description of the battle that,

"General Covington had advanced upon the enemy's right where his Artillery had been placed and at the moment when the 21st Regiment, Ripley's, assailed the British left, this Brigade forced the right by a vigorous onset and the result of the action was now looked upon with great certainty. The gallant conduct of General Covington attracted the attention of a party of sharp-shooters, stationed in Chrystler's house, one of whom leveled his piece and shot him from his horse. The wound proved to be mortal and in two days the General was dead."

The account of Headley, another historian of the war of 1812, is to the same effect, he says,

"The troops moved forward in three columns, drove the enemy's sharp shooters from the woods and emerged into an open space called Chrystler's Field directly in front of two English regiments; they were charged and driven back. General Covington falling fiercely on the left flank where the Artillery was posted, forced it to recoil, but at this critical moment, while bravely leading on his men, he was shot through the body. His fall disconcerted the Brigade and a shower of grape shot at that moment scourged it severely. This action has never received the praise it deserved. The conflict was close and murderous and nearly one-fifth of the whole force engaged were killed or wounded, a mortality never exhibited without the most desperate fighting."

One more extract, taken from the official report of the Commander-in-Chief, will suffice. He remarks in his communication of the 16th of November, 1813, to the Secretary of War that,

"It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to give a detailed account of this affair, which certainly reflects high honor on the valor of the American Soldier, as no example can be produced of undisciplined men with inexperienced officers braving a fire of two hours and a half without quitting the field or yielding to the antagonists. The front of the enemy was forced back more than a mile, and they never regained the ground they lost. The enemy having halted and our troops being again formed in battalion, front to front, and the firing having ceased on both sides, we resumed our position on the bank of the river and, the infantry being much fatigued, the whole was reembarked and proceeded down the river without further annoyance by the enemy or their gun boats, while the Dragoons with five pieces of Artillery marched down the Canada shore without molestation. It is due to his rank, his worth and his services that I should make particular mention of Brigadier General Covington, who received a mortal wound through the body while animating his men and leading them to the charge. He fell where he fought, at the head of his men, and survived but two days."

A few minutes after the fatal shot, which entered the lower part of his waistcoat directly in front, Lieut. Kean, Brigade Inspector and one of his staff, was at his side and aided by Asst. Adj. Gen. C. K. Gardner, who walked by the side of his horse, conducted him from the field. He was placed on board of the vessel of General Wilkinson and received every attention his situation required, and had the surgical skill of Doctor Bull, who had charge of the sick and wounded of the General Staff.

The next morning the Flotilla passed through the Sault and joined General Brown at Barnhart's near Cornwall. Here, to the astonishment of the whole army, a communication was received from General Hampton declining to cooperate with his command in the expedition against Montreal. so that, instead of forming the expected junction with him at St. Regis, it was now ascertained, with surprise and indignation, that he had taken up his line of march towards Lake Champlain.

In consequence of this failure on the part of General Hampton, a council of war was called composed of the General Officer, the Chief Engineer, Adj. General and some others, who decided unanimously that the attack on Montreal should be abandoned for the present season and that the troops should go into Winter Quarters immediately at French Mills near the Canada Border in New York. The Dragoons and Artillery horses were crossed over to the American side and about twelve o'clock on the following day, the troops having re-embarked, the Flotilla dropped down past the Indian village of St. Regis and proceeded eight miles further down the Eastern Channel to Salmon River, up which it rowed about six miles to the French Mills, arriving about dark. Shortly after, about 10 P. M., General Covington expired. He died, "lamented by the whole army, from the Commanding General to the private soldier, as well for his private virtues as for his value as an officer."

He was conscious from the first that his wound would prove mortal and his great distress was that he should die so far from his wife and children, whose names dwelt upon his dying lips; they occupied his latest thoughts with affectionate remembrance.

His death was announced to the army in the following general orders:

"Headquarters, French Mills, Nov. 15th, 1813.
General Orders.

The remains of the patriotic, gallant Brigadier General Covington are to be interred tomorrow with all of the honors which his rank and service give him title to; the procession to commence at twelve o'clock. The Officer of the day to form and direct the procession and interment agreeable to the plan which will be submitted to him by the Adj. General.

James Wilkinson, Major General."

According to the recollection of Col. Carr, the following officers were the pall bearers: Gen. Boyd, Col. Bissell, Col. Brady, Col. Breary, Col. Miller, Lieut. Col. Upham, Lieut. Col. Winfield Scott and Lieut. Col. Carr. In this perhaps his memory is in part at fault, as it is probable that Generals Brown and Swartwout, or one of them, would have been among the number, and it is more probable that the officers of his own Brigade, Col. Pierce, Lieut. Col. Cutting and Lieut. Col. Aspinwell, should have been assigned to this duty. Col. Chas. K. Gardner, late Adj. General of the United States, informed the biographer that he commanded the "Guard of Honor" on the occasion and fired the parting volley over the remains.

Thus ended this ill-starred expedition against Montreal, to the failure of which many causes conspired. Independent of the warring elements or the unfortunate delays and tardy progress down the St. Lawrence, which, whether unavoidable or not, were not the

less fatal, the continued presence of the Secretary of War on the Frontier, controlling and doubtless to some extent deranging the movements and embarrassing the action of the Commanding General, and more than all his mistaken faith in the influence he could exert to harmonize the views, stay the jealousies, and produce perfect concert and cooperation between the embittered rivals who were conjointly to carry out his designs, were perhaps the chief causes of its failure.

Mr. Madison thus disposed of the matter in his message to Congress:

"Operations were set on foot against the possessions of the enemy on the St. Lawrence; such however was the delay produced in the first instance by the adverse weather, of unusual violence and continuance, and such the circumstances attending the final movements of the army, that the prospect, at one time so favorable, was not realized."*

The gallantry displayed by General Covington and the heroic sacrifice of his life in the service of his country, together with his early and not forgotten services in the Indian campaigns with General Wayne, made his name honorable in the estimation of his countrymen, who vied in determination to perpetuate it, in the cities, towns and counties of many of the States by which it is borne. The second city in Kentucky in population and importance bears his name, as well as a score of towns and counties in other States.

Not long after his fall the following tribute to his memory appeared in the Baltimore Patriot:

* The British attached great importance to the Battle of Chrystler's Field. It was even suggested that it saved Canada to the Empire, because a decisive American victory there would have opened the road to Montreal. The British official report (by the Governor General) does not make it easier to understand the engagement. It claims an overwhelming success, saying, for example, that the American enemy "was not even able to cover the retreat of his beaten forces" and that Lieut. Col. Pearson continued to "pursue the beaten enemy in his flight." Contrast this with General Wilkinson's official statement—"The front of the enemy (British) were at first forced back more than a mile and though they never regained the ground they lost their stand was permanent and their courage resolute."

ELEGIAC VERSES

To the memory of Brigadier General Leonard Covington who lately fell in defense of his Country's violated rights.

"Dignum laude virum musa vetat mori." Hor.

Yes Covington the brave, my weeping muse,
Though long resigned her lyre unstrung,
One cypress wreath for thee would not refuse,
Nor leave thy deathless name unsung.

Nor with reluctance pour the pensive lay,
Or touch the panegyric string;
For he who first his genius op'd on day,
Should first his last sad tribute bring.

But why, departed Hero, should the tear
By sad affection's meed thus paid
Bedew those laurels, which thy worth shall wear,
Though on thy bleeding corpse now laid?

Ruthless the heart that melts not at thy fall,
Though glorious on the field well fought;
Who, ever at thy injured Country's call,
The boldest post of peril sought.

Resistless as the lightning's lambent flame,
With patriot love thy bosom glowed;
For this and for no vaunted views of fame
Thy life's loved crimson current flowed.

Rise then, thou sainted shade, triumphant rise,
To where a Warren's welcome's thine.
To where Montgomery opes the hailing skies,
And bids thy brightening glory shine.

Ah, Maryland, too few such sons, I ween,
As Covington thy bosom bear,
Too few, where public interests call, are seen;
Too few like him thy public virtue wear.

Then mourn, his loved Patuxent, gently mourn
Him, all thy willow bowers deplore,
For on thy favorite banks, now so forlorn,
Alas, thy Covington's no more.

With the funeral obsequies at French Mills, where the remains of the dead were committed to the frozen earth, this memoir might perhaps have been closed with the pious ejaculation—"Requiescat in pace," but those remains were not destined to remain there forever. Little more than a year elapsed before the blessings of peace were restored to our land. Battles had been fought meanwhile and fields won. Victory, become less coy, had made heroes of many who at Chrystler's Field confronted the grim visage of war in battle and heard the music of the bullets whistling around them for the first

time. These in time were dispersed, some to the shades of private life, others in the routine of duty to different and distant posts. In 1817 Madison Barracks, a durable and extensive work embracing the site of Fort Pike at Sacketts Harbor, were completed and here to garrison this post came some of those who were actors in the campaign of 1813, and here, in 1820 we find Col. Brady and his command, the 2nd regiment of infantry. Surrounding scenes and associations recalled to many of them the memory of their departed comrades and with a sense of humiliation they thought of the neglected remains of the gallant dead who had fallen in the late war.

The officers of this regiment, actuated by this feeling, resolved to collect the bodies of all who had so fallen from their several resting places and to remove them to Sacketts Harbor for re-interment where a suitable monument could be erected over them. As the first movement towards the accomplishment of this object a detachment was sent on the 4th of August, 1820, to remove the remains of the General and others from Fort Covington. The Sacketts Harbor Gazette of the 18th of August, 1820, gives the following account of the expedition and the ceremonies that were observed on its return.

"Pursuant to a resolution of the officers of the 2nd Regiment of the U. S. Infantry, Lieuts. Smith and Griswold with a barge proceeded down the St. Lawrence to French Mills and returned with the remains of Brigadier General Covington who was killed in the action of Chrystler's Field, and Lieuts. Cols. Dix and Johnson, who died in the service of their country at French Mills. The party left here on the 4th inst. and returned on the 13th. The remains of these gallant Officers were on Tuesday taken from the quarters of Lieutenant Bickler in this village, in procession, followed by the Officers and men of the Army, Navy and Marines on the Station, and a numerous concourse of the most respectable citizens of this place, Brownsville and Watertown. The following was the order of the procession:

1st. The Second Infantry, commanded by Capt. Thompson in columns of platoons as a funeral guard.

2nd.—Music.

Pall Bearers.
Lieut. Legate.
Capt. Gates.
Col. Brady.

Pall Bearers.
Lieut. Freeman.
Capt. Adams.
Com. Woolsey.

- 4th. Gen. Brown and Suite as mourners.
- 5th. Reverend Clergy.
- 6th. Capt. Gate's Company of U. S. Artillery in funeral order.
- 7th. U. S. Marines in funeral order.
- 8th. Sailors of the U. S. Navy in funeral order.
- 9th. Officers of the Army, Navy and Marines in funeral order.
- 10th. Citizens of Sacketts Harbor, Brownsville and Watertown.

Arriving at the place of interment, the Reverend Mr. Snowden addressed the Throne of Divine Grace in a very solemn, impressive

and appropriate prayer, well calculated to excite the purest feelings of patriotism and piety in the breasts of all present. The rites were concluded by firing volleys of musketry over the grave.

The remains of these meritorious officers were placed near the spot where those of our lamented Pike, Spencer, etc., were deposited.

It is ever gratifying to the friends of humanity to witness a suitable respect and veneration paid to the sacred ashes of the dead and more especially to those heroes who bravely fell in the defense of their country, and yielded up their lives to protect the rights and privileges we enjoy."

The article from which the foregoing is copied goes on to express,

"A fond expectation that the remains of all of the distinguished officers who died in our defense on or near this frontier during our second struggle for independence would be collected at this most appropriate spot and that a suitable monument might be erected over the gallant defenders of our rights and liberties, which shall not only tell to future ages their worth and glory, but shall also speak the gratitude their surviving countrymen feel for their effective services."

The writer adds,

"We do not pretend that a monument is necessary to perpetuate their fame. No, their gallant achievements shall illumine the pages of history when this marble shall have crumbled into dust; but we esteem it essential to our honor and the honor of our country that such a structure should be erected to show how we have appreciated their gallant conduct and to disprove the ancient adage that, 'Republics are ungrateful.'"

How signally this adage was disproved and how soon "this marble" crumbled into dust, will be seen in the sequel.

Shortly after the performance of these ceremonies, it was announced through the medium of the public press that the remains of the other distinguished dead alluded to had been recovered and that the Officers of the 2nd Regiment of Infantry had determined to erect a monument over them, and ere long through the same channel it was made known that the remains of all these officers deposited in a common grave with Generals Pike and Covington reposed beneath the Monument erected to perpetuate their fame. Under this gratifying illusion the distant friends and relatives of these heroes rested and some of them perhaps still rest. As this memoir is written less for the public eye than to satisfy the laudable desire of the descendants and relatives of our subject to learn all relating to one whose memory they have been taught to reverence, our narrative will be extended to embrace a final view of the scenes of some of his achievements as they appeared at a recent visit, as well as the condition and aspect of his honored grave.

A score of years had not elapsed after the closing battle of Wayne's campaign when our army in the panoply of war again trod

this well remembered field and some of those who gathered their earliest laurels there were again present to reap a new harvest. But Covington was not among them; his duties led him elsewhere and deeper into the enemy's country, where a few months later, as has been seen, he was destined gloriously to fall. One of his comrades, the former stripling Aide of Gen. Wayne, William Henry Harrison, was there, now the Governor of a great territory, the Commander of the North-Western Army and the successful defender of Fort Meigs, overlooking from the opposite side of the Maumee his former battle field of the "Fallen Timbers." Here Proctor and his savage allies were foiled and this and subsequent successes led General Harrison ultimately to the first office in the gift of his country.

At the date of this memorable seige there were but a few white inhabitants settled at the foot of the rapids and these took refuge within the walls of the camp. Crushed and humbled by the defeat of 1794, the Indian settlements and their extensive fields had disappeared, and of their once thriving villages no indications remained.

Since this period (1812) nearly half a century has passed away; the march of improvement has stretched far west and broad and flourishing states have pressed back the border of the savage empire to the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, and now the once desert wilds of the Maumee, teeming with population, cultivated and improved, offer every facility for communication and intercourse.

A year ago (1860) invited by the great convenience of access by means of the well appointed railroad traversing this region and stimulated by a strong impulse to visit the scenes of adventure and heroism so interwoven with the traditions of our family, the writer, accompanied by his wife, the sole surviving child of General Covington, determined to shape the course of a Northern tour so as to gratify in some degree this desire cherished from childhood by both.

At Cincinnati we met with Col. John Johnson, an erect, hale and soldierly old gentleman of eighty-six years, who politely called upon us and spent an evening in our quarters. He was long an agent of our Government among the Indians and then the President of the Pioneer Association of Ohio, himself one of the last pioneers of this once savage region. Communicative and courteous, he gave us many of his recollections of the Indian wars. Having been attached in early youth in some capacity to the army of General Wayne and retaining a cherished recollection of the subject of our memoir, it was with no little apparent gratification that he seized upon the occasion to detail to the daughter the incidents and adventures connected with the early military career of her father. Provided by him with a written program of our route with reference to the best sources of information, we had a kindly parting with this genial old gentleman, and taking passage on the Dayton and Toledo Railroad on the next

morning, enjoying the freshness of a balmy spring day, we bowled cheerfully along one of the most fertile and highly cultivated countries it was ever our fortune to traverse. For nearly half our route we encountered a succession of beautiful villages and more imposing towns. Gardens and vineyards appeared on every side and our way was dotted with elegant mansions and rural residences embowered in groves and shrubberies that indicated a high degree of wealth, taste and refinement. Early in the afternoon having accomplished in less than a day the travel of a week by ordinary means of locomotion, we left the cars at Perrysburg. Having secured a carriage and engaged an obliging driver, we set out the next morning for the battle field of the Fallen Timbers. It was a clear, mild Sabbath morning, the 27th of May, 1860, and we devoted the day to the pious remembrance of the honored dead and of the services of those who had by their gallantry and patriotic devotion given renown to the place and made it an object of lasting interest; calling up in imagination as we passed over the field the deeds of daring and heroism enacted there. Mr. Spink, the late Treasurer of Wood County, obligingly took a seat with us and proved himself a most intelligent and attentive guide. He had resided near the place for more than twenty years and, having been over the ground repeatedly with an old French trader who was with the Indians in the battle, was thus enabled to point out the different localities and to detail some of the incidents of the conflict.

Crossing the Maumee near the foot of the rapids over an imposing suspension bridge, by the side of another costly structure of the same kind intended for the passage of the Railroad, we entered the City of Maumee on the west side of the river.

Much as we were prepared for the change from the primitive wilderness, the transformation wrought by the magic touch of art and civilization surpassed our utmost expectations. The stream, it is true, we might suppose in itself unchanged; the eddying waters as of yore rippled over the rocky bed and poured into the more tranquil and deeper channel at the foot of the rapids. But on either shore we found a thriving town, each rejoicing in that modern adjunct of commerce, a clattering, busy railroad, whilst on the west a canal stretched away in the distance, freighted with the rich products of trade.

Wending our way upwards through the mills and machinery for preparing the grain from the teeming fields of the vicinage and fashioning the lumber of the great forests into forms and dimensions suited for freight, crossing again and again the canal, its feeders and sluices, conducting to and from the river, we reached the point where the battle is said to have begun. This is the head or upper end of the narrow insulated ridge or hill marked on the

plan as Presque Isle.* The summit of this is now bare and except for a few clumps of trees extending along the margin of the river the forest has disappeared. A marshy meadow or prairie, partially reclaimed and cultivated, spreads out to the west and by the side of the road, which passes lengthwise over the hill and near a farmhouse at its lower end is seen the limestone boulder, one of the well known landmarks of the field. Near this end and on the open space next to the river the cavalry made its decisive charge and cut off the fugitives in their attempt to cross over the river at the foot of the rapids. It was here, tradition says, that the Indian warrior, Turkey Foot, rallied a few followers and made his final stand; and, to commemorate the place of his fall, the Indians have sculptured the face of the rock with imitations of turkey tracks cut deeply into it, emblematic of the warrior's name. It is a spot that the Indians were long wont to visit at stated intervals, leaving upon the rocks pieces of tobacco and other offerings to the manes of the dead.

Retracing our steps and passing downwards through the whole extent of Maumee City we rested before the walls of old Fort Miami, under which the fugitive savages sought shelter from Wayne's pursuing legion. It stands on a commanding bluff jutting out into the River and was reoccupied by the British during the siege of Fort Meigs in 1813. Save the earthworks of the Fortress, nothing now remains to attest to its former strength. The buildings and batteries, casemates and cannon have long been removed or have crumbled away under the wasting influence of time; but the traces of the moat and the massive earthen parapets, green with consolidating sod, unless the utilitarian hand of man should intervene, will for coming centuries distinctly designate the spot.

In the freshness of the ensuing morn we steamed down the Toledo in the little fairy packet "Belle," took passage on the railroad and coasted along Lake Erie its whole length, passing Cleveland and Buffalo and arriving at Niagara early next day. Spending a few days at this enchanting spot, of which we will not pause to speak, we descended along the river shore by railroad to Lewistown, shooting the terrific descent with startling speed, high above and overlooking the narrowed and chafing Niagara, walled in perpendicular cliffs and rocks, dashing in foaming whirlpools to its outlet in Ontario; gazing with special wonder as we approached the Lake upon the distant suspension bridge thrown over the stream and seemingly hung on threads of gossamer stretched through the skies; catching frequent glimpses of Queenstown and the far-seen monument of General Brock. Ontario was in her placid mood and we experienced no boisterous outbreak in embarking on her waters. A

* The "plan" is omitted here.

balmy moonlight passage brought us in early morning to Oswego and before noon we were safely landed in Sacketts Harbor.

We lost no time in visiting Madison Barracks. Col. E. Camp, an old officer of the Volunteer Militia in 1813, to whom General Covington was well known at Sacketts Harbor, called upon us with his son, Mr. Erskine M. Camp, to whom we were indebted for many civilities, and both kindly accompanied us to the spot. We found the Barracks extensive of plan, of massive construction, of durable material, forming three sides of a square, the open side towards the water. Considering the long time they have been dis-used, they were upon the whole well preserved; but the large, more imposing and finished structures used for a hospital and Commissary's Storehouse, detached and in front, near the water's edge, have been less fortunate. The decayed roof of the hospital especially has consigned the building to a state of ruin which will soon leave only the walls standing. The crumbling ceiling and the slates are now falling through the floors and carrying with them the marble mantles and other tasteful and elegant accessories of the structure.

We found the Barracks and the grounds in charge of Wm. Gaines, an Ordnance Sergeant, a hale old soldier of some sixty-five years who was one of the detachment to remove the remains of General Covington, and assisted in the reinterment when Col. Brady was here in command, and he has remained here in charge for the protection of the Government property ever since, a period of about forty years. The grounds on which the Barracks stand are nearly a plain, sloping a little only towards the water, and in the rear there is an extensive level enclosure fenced in by pickets formed of the trunks of small cedars pointed at the top and set into the ground in close contact with each other, forming a strong barrier, time seeming to have had little influence on them, as they exhibit but little evidence of decay.

A part of this space seems originally to have been used for gardens by the Garrison; the rest shows the vestiges of a burial ground commenced when a fatal epidemic prevailed among the southern troops transferred here and too suddenly exposed to the chilling blasts of a northern winter. A few detached and scattered tombstones mark the graves of some of the Officers and attaches of the Army who perished by disease, both during and since the war. Among these in the rear and to the southwest of the Barracks stands a small solitary enclosure, scarce ten feet square, of plain wooden palings, and within Sergeant Gaines pointed us to the MONUMENT to which we had come as pilgrims.

We had heard of a proposed monument by the Officers of the Army, of the disputed claims of different towns to the honor of preserving these remains, that the claims of Sacketts Harbor had prevailed, that all were here assembled and a suitable structure pro-

vided. Under the simple delusion we in common with the friends and relatives of most of the distinguished dead had lived. Somehow in our simplicity we had believed in the alleged National and State provision made for this object. We had seen at the other end of Ontario an imposing column reared to proclaim a Nation's gratitude to one dead hero, and we found over all those buried here in one common grave—a temporary monument of pine boards, "the form without the substance" of a testimonial to their memory.

Of the form without the substance of a testimonial the last vestige will soon have mingled with the dust. One of the panels, that on which General Pike's name was inscribed, has disappeared, as has the wooden urn by which it was surmounted. On the other panels the names of the officers may yet be traced, now somewhat in relief by the weathering away of the parts of the board not protected by the paint by which they were lettered. The view of the enclosure surrounding the grave is given from a photograph taken at the time of our visit, and facsimiles of the inscriptions on the panels are subjoined, and we add also the portrait of the venerable Sergeant, so long the custodian of the grounds and the unrelieved sentinel over the last resting place of the remains he assisted in placing there and to which a forgetful and niggardly Country has shown so little regard.*

Promises were not wanting that an ornamental tree should be planted to mark the spot when the frail wooden enclosure should disappear.

* A pencil sketch of one side of the wooden monument that was standing in 1860 shows the name Covington and some additional lettering, hard to decipher. This sketch probably represents the "fac-similes of inscriptions" to which Col. Wailes referred. On April 24, 1928, a relative of General Covington visited Madison Barracks (now a well garrisoned post) and after some difficulty found the soldiers' cemetery. It is near the entrance to a polo field, separated from the Barracks by a line of private residences, the Highway to Watertown, and then a large civilian cemetery. No wooden monument is there now and the name of General Covington was not found. There is a granite block about eighteen inches high, three feet long, and about two feet deep, standing on a low base of concrete. The front surface is polished and has the following inscription—

To
Brig. Genl. Z. M. Pike U. S. A.
and His Officers
Killed in Battle of
York Upper Canada
April 27th, 1813.

Behind this, a few feet away, are several low stone markers for "unknown officers" of the War of 1812.

The contemporary report of the reinterment in 1820 published by the Sacketts Harbor Gazette says that the remains of Gen. Covington, Lt. Col. Dix and Lt. Col. Johnson "were placed near the spot where those of our lamented Pike, Spencer, etc., were deposited." Col. Wailes states that later it was announced by newspapers that remains of other officers had been recovered and all had been deposited in "a common grave with Generals Pike and Covington" and that a monument had been erected. The wooden monument was evidently for all the officers of the War of 1812 buried in the enclosure and it was probably erected in a central location with respect to several adjacent graves; and it seems reasonable to assume that the present markers were set down with only approximate correctness.

It is of interest that Colorado has recently sought permission from Congress to remove the remains of General Pike for a splendid reinterment in that State. The movement has been opposed with the argument that because of common burial and uncertain marking it is impossible to select Gen. Pike's remains.

APPENDIX



SOME LETTERS

of

LEONARD COVINGTON

SOME OF GENERAL COVINGTON'S LETTERS

Leonard Covington to
Alex. Covington.
Augusta, Ga.

Aquasco, 25th January, 1797.

Dear Sandy:—

Your lengthy epistle of the 26th inst., came duly to hand. I am sorry to learn by it of your indisposition, and I must repeat to you what I have said in a former letter, that nothing can justify your turning out in unfavorable weather. You would do well to study your condition and nurse and humor it on every occasion, which, together with the soft climate you are now in, I have great hopes will restore and establish your health. I find great pleasure in reading your humorous account of the countries through which you have traveled, and the number of agreeable anecdotes which you relate, particularly that which relates to your little sorrel and Pool. I am glad your friends and traveling companions are all well, as I suppose they are from your silence on that head. We are anxious to know when we may expect you among us, how you like Georgia, and what are your prospects there, and I hope Col. Beall will meet with a happy and speedy issue to his business in that quarter. Tell Walles I must hear from him immediately; I have written him several times since he left us, and have sent the enclosed which I just found in Lower Marlboro. Tell Mr. Lloyd Walles that the letter he promised me to write from Richmond has never come to hand. I informed him immediately on the receipt of his favor from Mr. Thomas's of the recovery of Mr. Oden. Mr. Butler is still dangerously ill. All our friends and relations in this quarter are in health. Mr. Turner Wooten died a few weeks since. No marriages or births since you left us, except that of Capt. G. Walles to Miss Greenfield, whose marriage was celebrated with great pomp at his brother Levin's a few days since. All the neighborhood were assembled on the occasion; the flowing bowl flew round with cheerful alacrity, and the festive dance was for hours incessant when innocent jocularly and pleasing tete-a-tete resounded from corner to corner, and, as heretofore, the presence of four young swans added great brilliancy to the entertainment, though I verily believe a number of old and young geese might have been in our flock.

I have informed you of the state of your pecuniary matters in my former communications, and have only to add on that subject that Caesar still remains unhired, and that Mr. Brooks says he is unable, until he prizes his tobacco, to settle your account.

Tell my friend Wailes I want much to know what arrangements he is making; where he thinks he will take up his residence in the Spring, and what are his prospects in the family way, etc., etc., etc. His old friend, Capt. Harwood, is again confined to his bed from a fall off his horse, nearly in the same place he took his other tumble, and I believe under pretty much the same circumstances.

Having now given you all the little occurrences of the neighborhood, as far as my recollection will serve me, I shall take the liberty of requesting you to be circumstantial when you write me in all matters which you think will be amusing or interesting. I should suppose you could not want for subject matter when so frequently shifting the scene.

Your sister joins me in wishing to be remembered to Mr. and Mrs. Wailes and Col. Beall. Remember us also to Mr. and Mrs. Jones and believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Leo. Covington.

Washington, D. C.

½ after 12, 3rd Dec., 1805.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington.

Near Nottingham, Maryland.

Dear Sandy:—

With this you will receive the President's Message and will know how to appreciate its contents. By the way, let me observe that it smells confoundedly of gun powder; as to the sentiment which it may have excited in the minds of the people's representatives, I am not yet able to form a correct opinion, as it has but just this moment been communicated. I think it, however, very desirable that the minds of the people should be prepared at least to encounter the preparation necessary for a defensive attitude. These preparations will of course assume the aspect of War, and may therefore carry with them some sentiment of alarm which ought to be prevented. For my own part, I feel that preparation will of itself force our enemies (if indeed they be so) to forbear their unwarrantable aggressions.

One of the Representatives from Georgia, Mr. Easley, is boarder in the same house with myself, and one of my mess mates. He has been so good as to introduce me to the member from the vicinity of Augusta, who well knows Wailes, and he informs me that W. had said he wished to write to me by him, but that he (W.) had not returned from the back county, where he had been called on an important survey. Wailes is doing well and very likely to do still better. I think we may look for letters from him any day.

Here I am extremely agreeably situated, every hour forming new acquaintances, and in our particular mess more than agreeably situated. There are now 10 of us and we expect an addition of 1 or 2 more. The Speaker of our House, Mr. Macon, Senator Worthington of Ohio, Col. Morrow of Virginia, Col. Williams and Lady from South Carolina, Mr. Bedinger of Kentucky, etc., compose our Mess.

Yours in haste and in truth,

Leo. Covington.

P. S.—Both houses of Congress formed a quorum the first day. The Senate had 19 members, and chose General S. Smith. Our House had 106 attending members. Please forward the accompanying papers as directed without delay.

Leonard Covington to

Alexander Covington,

Nottingham, Maryland.

Washington, D. C.

7th January, 1806.

Dear Sandy:—

The operations of Congress become every day more and more interesting. The last two days have been spent in discussions with closed doors. The debates were extremely animated and interesting and it is to be regretted that the several speeches will be lost to the public. The war of words was entirely confined to the Republicans—the Feds. sat mute and enjoyed in silence the honest and perhaps necessary oppugnations among their political rivals. The speakers were Randolph, Bidwell, Macon, Epps, Clay, and G. W. Campbell, and I am sorry that I am unable to say what will be the results, for the subjects of discussion have not yet been brought to a close, and probably will be suspended for several days to come. But, lend me your ear and I will whisper to you the several points of discussion. Shall we, or shall we not add to our regular military establishment by raising (recruiting) a given number of troops to repel the aggressions and inroads of our Southern neighbors. This measure is supported by Randolph and Clay, and opposed by Epps, Macon and G. W. Campbell.

Shall we or shall we not appropriate money for the purchase of the Floridas; this measure is advocated by Bidwell and Epps and opposed by Randolph and Macon. This latter gentleman and G. W. C. are for a reliance on the militia if circumstances should require a military force at all. There is one other point before us yet for discussion, viz., shall we retract our pretensions to a part of Louisiana so as to meet the ideas and suggestions of Spain as relates to the Boundaries of this country, and by negotiation endeavor again

to adjust our differences with that Nation. Although this question has not yet undergone full consideration, I think it is not difficult to foretell that it will meet with many advocates. Thus, my dear Sandy, have I disclosed to you the all important secrets which hold on conclave the great councils of our nation (for with you I have none, nor is it necessary there should be any secrets). If it be your wish to communicate with our mutual and really intelligent friend Dr. R. on these Topics, it will not be difficult to make him understand the grounds upon which you have been permitted to peep behind the curtain, when he will know how to act in the premises. Before I close this letter I cannot refrain from saying that any effort on your part to make up a correct opinion upon the subjects under our consideration would most likely be unavailing, unless you were acquainted with certain data, which time nor the limits of a letter will not suffer me to afford you; it might be well, therefore, for you to suspend an opinion until we meet, and God willing, I'll see home on Friday or Saturday ensuing, and if your leisure and health, etc., etc., will suffer, I shall be happy to see you at Aquasco, on Sunday next; come though under arrangements to stay all night, else I shall be unable to say half the odd matters and strange things to you in which you may be assured your interest will be strongly excited. On Monday morning we can come up the road together betimes.

The Yazoo agents have again assembled about the walls of the Capitol. These Harpies have, for some days, been hovering over the flesh pots of Congress, and have at length perched upon the Senate Chamber and endeavored to fasten their Talons upon the Good Will of the members of that body. What will be their fate I am unable to foreknow.

Give my love to Harriett and your little ones and accept for yourself my unalterable esteem.

Leo. Covington.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Nottingham, Maryland.

Washington, D. C.
1st April, 1806.

Dear Sandy:—

Tabs will hand you this on his way to Aquasco, together with the Monday's and this day's Intelligencer. They will inform you of Congressional proceedings, and amongst other things, of the total defeat of the Yazoo Bill, which I am sorry to say worked its way through the Senate, but received its death blow in a few hours after its presentation to our house. This event produced great joy and congratulation amongst the honest ones, and no little disappointment

and mortification to the land jobbing gentry. Yesterday we were in conclave deciding whether the injunction of secrecy should be taken off of our proceedings of this session, and at last this important point is obtained, but by a very small majority. The public will now be able to judge of the propriety of our conclave proceedings, and whether, as Mr. Randolph has said, the Nation has truckled to France, and wishes to bully England. For my own part, although I do not view the business in this odious point of light, yet I am persuaded that we have not managed matters quite as well as they do theirs in France, or, in other words, I fear "there is something rotten in the State of Denmark," and God only knows what it all will end in. Randolph has certainly denounced the administration in the most pointed manner. We are left now to choose between the culpability of administration, and the veracity of Mr. R. He asserts that Mr. Madison informed him that France would not permit Spain to adjust her differences with us until she, (France) had money. That we must propitiate France with money, then she would make Spain do us justice. He also asserts that a proposition was made by one of the heads of Department (Madison I suppose) to draw out of the Treasury Two Millions of Dollars for the above purpose, without appropriation by law, or any other authority, upon the credit of Congress passing a law of authority. Also that Government has borrowed money without the authority of law, and that the Government paper is now due in bank, etc., etc., but really I am so lost in amazement myself, and the general opinion appears so much against Mr. R.'s ideas, that I am constrained to suspend my opinion on this all important point, and yet I cannot but entertain fears and doubts, and, as I said before, God only can tell what it will all end in.

I pray God that you have fully recovered your health, and that you may long, very long enjoy it in full perfection.

Proud to hear that our friend R. has got over his amorous difficulties and he has my ardent wishes for a long and plenary enjoyment of all the blessings which the conjugal state is capable of affording.

Pray how does my affair with Senor Worsing stand? Surely he has given you some satisfaction by this time, and be sure he has given you the Hd of whiskey, together with fair promises at least.

Love to Harriet and the little ones.

Yours,

L. Covington.

P. S. I have been with Col. Lyles, and he is willing to be a candidate for election, and is anxious that something be done in the upper end of the county to obtain a good candidate. This court ought not to be passed by. Think over these matters and try to stimulate our friends.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Nottingham, Maryland.

Annapolis, Md.,
15th December, 1807.

Dear Brother:—

You would no doubt think that my situation should afford me opportunities for obtaining information which are not to be had in a less public one, but the truth is, we hear little else than speculative opinions about war or peace: calculating notions about the price of tobacco and loud talking legislation upon the propriety of granting divorces or creating corporations. As to the question of war or peace, or the doings of our great Sanhedrim, you know and can judge as well as myself, but the general sentiment is war: of this General Wilkinson is positive, but yet I have hopes. See the British Proclamation: this indeed adds insult to injury, and in truth leaves little ground to hope for an accommodation. The contents of this instrument considered in connection with the erratic character of their minister, who is a disciple of the old school, and a pupil of the Monster Pitt: one can scarce resist the idea of a certain rupture.

In point of number, our Legislature here has already laws enough but on the score of importance, perhaps few enough. At this moment I recollect but two of general importance, and these may be considered as claiming a considerable character in that point of view—the one under the title somewhat like the following—"To grant possessions (of land) under defective deeds, etc."—that is to say, securing to persons their titles to lands held under deeds which may have been defective for want of rigid compliance with the letter of the law, etc., etc.—a Damn bad thing for lawyers. 2nd:—Granting a charter for a bank in Hagerstown, upon the same principles as the F. Bank. The militia law is just reported and printed, and will perhaps be this day called up in the House of Representatives. I don't like it and think it won't go down in our house. It differs but little from the old one, and yet it is intended to repeal that, and let all the appointments be made de novo.

Pray tell me what has become of our kinsman H. W. M.——? I sold him my tobacco, and, (between ourselves) I have——it, for it is now all to——in Baltimore. Do attend a little to this matter for me, and if things look squally, try if something can't be done. But I look for him here every day and God knows what can be done: perhaps if he cant sell he will return me the tobacco.

I should be glad to know how your sale resulted and how your arrangements go on.

Please send a horse for me to Upper Marlboro on Thursday, 12 o'clock the 24th, inst., and God willing I'll be with you.

Oh this wretched place! Nothing can equal its extravagance—Damn the place——.

I don't know one word of what I have written. Love to all.

L. Covington.

I can't take time to read this over, but don't forget the horse Xmas Eve, the 24th inst.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Nottingham, Maryland.

Sunset Sunday Evening.
(Some time in 1807).

Dear Brother:—

I have but one moment allowed me to say that there is the Devil to pay at Richmond. I have seen the President, Mr. Madison, and Judge Duvall and could tell you wonderful and strange matters and things. In addition to Burr and Blennerhasset, the Grand Jury have found Bills against Dayton, Smith of Ohio, Floyd and many others—in short, the world will be astonished at the extent of the treason, and the number of characters knowing to and concerned therein. Burr was immediately committed to prison under a strong guard, but his counsel have raised a question before the court whether he may not be bailed, and you know the temper of that honorable Bench. A Cabinet Council will be held on Tuesday next touching British outrage. Mr. Gallatin and General Dearborn are sent for.

Farewell! The stage starts presently and I am off.

L. Covington.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Natchez, Mississippi Territory,

Aquasco,
2nd May, 1808

Dear Brother:—

Your three highly acceptable and esteemed favors from R. S. Fort, Pittsburg and Marietta all reached me by last mail and their contents have afforded us unspeakable satisfaction. The celerity of your movements have astonished us as well as gratified us. It bespeaks, with the Blessing of God, a speedy termination to your arduous undertaking, and we fondly flatter ourselves that you will reach your place of destination at farthest, by the last of this month, and that the Almighty Ruler of our destines may safely bring you

to the land of health, peace and plenty, shall be the ardent prayer of your affectionate brother. Here I cannot refrain from expressing my apprehensions that confinement upon water may deprive you of your wonted good health, well knowing how necessary exercise is for the preservation of this best of blessings. I have been not a little surprised and hurt at the conduct of your man Phill, and think you were particularly fortunate in his so speedy recovery. But for this untoward circumstance, and the probable loss incurred by the elopement of your little horse, your disbursements would have been as reasonable as was your journey facile and expeditious, which indeed has agreeably astonished all our friends here; yet I hope that the loss upon your horse purchase may yet be retrieved in the way you suggest, and I am in hopes that I may be able to turn little pony to a pretty good account, as I understand that Mrs. Bowie of Nottingham wants him for her little daughter. I have offered him for \$25.00; he and saddle are both safe in hand and shall be turned to the best advantage possible. Your man Sam still remains in Statu Quo, and I have him employed, not being able to hire him out, having offered him to Capt. Skinner and others, who declined hiring, and J. T. L. Wood seems not altogether to have gotten his own consent to purchase. But, as I informed you in a previous letter (which ought to reach Natchez before you) I still entertain hopes of being able to forward him to you by some means or other, and in furtherance of my plans, you would do well to have some of your people write a letter or two to their relations in this quarter a few fine flourishes touching the good things and matters of Natchez (for instance) let old Nat write to some of Mr. Johnson's people (directing the letter under cover to his master) in which he may incidentally mention the pleasures, etc., which Sam has lost by not going. It may not be so well for any of your people to write directly to Sam. Phill might write to his wife, but in every instance forbear to mention his defection at Pittsburg, which I have kept a profound secret, fearing that it might induce the idea of dissatisfaction among your people. Pray, my dear Brother, write me as soon and as often as possible after you reach Natchez. I long to know how and where you will pitch your tent and plant your fig tree, what may be your prospects and how the country will agree with your constitution. I pray that you may soon find our friend and kinsman L. Wailes and in him a friend indeed. His experience and his counsels cannot fail to be useful. Tell our mutual and dear friend Capt. M. that our prospects for a tobacco crop are gloomy because of the ravages of the insect (fly). The month of April has been peculiarly unfavorable, and at present we suffer considerably from drouth, not having had rain for near three weeks. The past month has also been very sickly and a number of deaths among the

poor have been the consequence, but all our friends and relatives are in health and much the old way.

For news and politics I refer you to the paper which I send you regularly. God bless and preserve you all prays your ever affectionate Brother.

Leo. Covington.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Washington, Mississippi Territory.

Aquasco,
17th Aug., 1808.

My Dear Brother:—

I wrote you about ten days since conjointly with our friend Capt. J. T. M., in which I acknowledged the receipt of both your favors of 22nd and 30th June; I now write you again in continuation. In my letter alluded to above you are informed of my designs in relation to an establishment in your Territory; this design I still nourish and shall only suspend preparatory operations until your advice is fully received. I find that I can dispose of my Calvert lands, but for the present forbear to do so until every information and advice is received which I hold to be necessary for enabling me to mature my plans upon a———at once extended and profitable. Let me therefore beg your thoughts and reflections, upon the following points particularly, and in general such other information as you may deem useful to my purpose. You have never been circumstantial as to the manner and terms of hiring your people. It would certainly be material to the owner of slaves, whether their treatment in many respects was such as would be desirable, and in what manner the payments for hirelings were made; if in advance, or punctually at the month's end. Whether the slaves were well fed; and only compelled to work from "sun to sun." It is possible that so much labor may be required of hirelings and so little regard may be had for their constitutions as to render them in a few years, not only unprofitable, but expensive. In your case, who pays the doctor, abides the loss from death or running away? Do the negroes in that country generally look as happy and contented as with us, and do they as universally take husbands and wives and as easily rear their young as in Maryland? Would your negroes, think you, willingly return to Maryland? Are they satisfied with the change and with their treatment? Is the culture of cotton much easier, and a more certain crop than our tobacco? Is there any probability that you will have any better market for your cotton than we shall have for our tobacco should our differences with Europe terminate in a war? Will this not depend upon the progress of manufactures in this country? Is the expense of making a cotton crop, where a

man has hands of his own, considerable? What seems to be the current price of horses, cattle, etc., etc. The expense of clothing must be less than in a more northern climate. On lands of the U. S. such as you would like to purchase, what would be the probable expense of rough buildings and clearing for a small crop, say for ten or twelve hands? What time would such a preparation take? Fruit—is it abundant and well flavored, etc., etc. What seems to be the usual fare or allowance for working negroes, where a planter has a good many, from 10 to 20, for example? Have you any sudden or great changes from heat to cold, and do you suffer as much from droughts or violent falls of rain as with us? I have a thousand more questions in my head, but pushed for time just now, must hope that you will say everything that I could ask, not forgetting politics, the state of religion, if there be much amongst you. As to dealings generally, are the folks pretty punctual, or is there much use for lawyers: Have you found the summer sun more intolerable than in this climate? Has the thermometer been at a greater degree of heat than 85 or 86, what we experience about the latter end of June?

Our prospects for crops of corn are very good, but only tolerable for tobacco. Fruit we have in abundance, and, upon the whole, the Lap of old Mother Earth seems to be spread with abundance and the closing year will afford us pretty full barns and granaries.

As to the state of our political thermometer, I know you are not altogether indifferent. We are at present in pretty much of a bustle, and on Saturday next we shall endeavor to give warmth and vigor to our coadjutors; on that day we have called a meeting of the voters of this district for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of the Nation, and you may look out for an expression of our sentiments under the following heads: viz., In approbation of the measures of administration generally, and particularly the embargo. The support of Mr. Madison as most likely to secure to us a continuation of the benefits of the present administration. A recommendation of General R. B. as Elector for———Notice of the attempt to array Mr. Clinton and Mr. Monroe in opposition to the administration. In approbation of General James Wilkinson's conduct, etc., etc. A call upon our republican brethren to take measures in relation to our Congressional representative A. V. H.

I thank God that I can say all friends are well and earnestly pray for your enjoyment of this best of blessings—you and all friends. Pray lay your heads together and give me every kind of information you may imagine I stand in need of.

Yours in sincerity and truth,

L. Covington.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Washington, Miss.

Aquasco,
15th February, 1809.

My Dear Brother:

I have done no little violence to my feelings in delaying to write you for some time, but under a fond expectation that I should be able to send you some satisfactory information as well in relation to your affairs entrusted to my management, as of my intended movements towards an establishment in your country, I have the more readily given in to this delay, because our friend Rawlings has written several times, and we use one pen and communicate the same sentiments.

Your business with Mr. Dent seems to be attended with some strange fatality. No tidings from that quarter have yet reached me, and I am still under the impression before intimated, that you have communicated with Mr. Dent on the subject of your claim, perhaps through our friend Wailes.

Your wishes as signified sometime since, as to an exchange of Sam for negro girl, as also the conversion of your bonds into such property, has had my particular attention and I fear there will be difficulty in the execution from the failure of several efforts already made, but you may rely upon my best exertions. I am at present in negotiation with Mr. Chas Smith near Benedict for the exchange of Sam but have not much prospect of success on tolerable terms. Sam himself maintains a sullen silence on the subject and neither yields consent to accompany my people, or to be sold or exchanged. I apprehend some trouble from him, but shall certainly make some disposition of him, which I hope will meet with your approbation.

Of all the devils that ever did beset a man in this life the want of money, in my present situation, is surely the most troublesome one. Not one cent can be had either from debtors or speculators. Two crops of tobacco on hand and 200 bbls. of corn, but all wont do. One of my Calvert farms is leased out for three years, and Famore's Neck is still in the market, and I have now a renewed prospect of making sale, but let this business end as it may, I consider the die is cast, and, God willing, our folks will be down upon you the early part of June. Our friend Rawlings was here a day or two ago and has his arrangements in a certain state of forwardness, having actually sold out his interest in the Duckett Estate to the Judge, and in a few days will embrace \$1500, which with 16 or 18 negroes will give him a bold start. As to myself, I repeat that I must be off, having accepted a military commission (Lt. Coln. of Lt. Dragoons) I consider the Rubicon is passed. My present arrangement with the War Department will however, I hope, enable me to remain here or hereabouts until my better self shall be in a plight to accompany me. She promises an increase of family sometime in April, after which event, as soon as may be, we shall break ground (via Tennessee) descend the Cumberland or pass the Wilderness.

You will no doubt have heard of the appointment of our friend W. D. Beall to the same rank as myself in the infantry and I expect you will ere long hear of him in that quarter. General Wilkinson is now on his way to Orleans by water with a good number of newly appointed and newly recruited soldiers, and will command in that

quarter in person. Pray look to our chances of settling in your neighborhood, and suffer not our worthy ones, Capt. Magruder and Mr. Wailes to go astray. We must keep together if possible; but more of this anon. We shall need all of your aid upon the arrival of our people at the Natchez, who will be sent under charge of careful friends, such for example as Mr. T. Rawlings, A. Steele, etc. I thank you for advice touching certain necessary purchases in Pennsylvania or Kentucky, and shall endeavor to profit by it. I should most gladly purchase such mechanics as you recommend, but in truth negroes here are comparatively scarce and exceedingly dear.

In detailing to you some of the particulars of neighborhood occurrences, I perform a most melancholy duty when I announce the death of our dear relation and worthy friend Mr. Levin Mackall of H. P.* and Mr. Jno. Marlow of Matopani. Worthy souls. They have but recently gone to that Bourne from which no traveler has ever returned. Trust they have exchanged the troubles and cares of mortality for a world of rest and enjoyment.

The times are tough, but in other respects the good folks jog on as usual. The following is a list of my people, such as go and such as stay.

For Mississippi			
Watt	32	Tom	36
Bess	24	Salisbury	32
Dick	17	Moses	15
Phil	12	Major	10
Dyche	35	Carolina	19
Sal	10	Tom	5
Pool	6	Nick	5
Hanna	1	Rachel	22
Ben	3	John	1
Jenny	26	Eliza	3
Nat	1	Jim	11
Rachel	11	Clem	9
Tom	7	Cesar	5
Dasy	3	Cilla	12
Bessie	11	George	9
Flora	5		

For Aquasco			
Nick	50	Ned	24
Jack	22	Tabb	22
Bob	34	Nancy	46
Pegg	20	Betsy	18
Isaac	10	Grace	5
Kitty	6	Charles	6
Charles	3	Nell	2
Henry	2 mos.	Cristy	32
Flora	5	Nell	30
Nick	30	Dine	26
Nancy	5	Sophia	2
Lucy	34	Joe	1
Fanny		Moll	

* Presumably Half Pone, the name of a plantation.

I have yet much unsaid, but my paper is out and I will close with the promise of much more in my next, after apprising you of the reasons for not sending the Aurora as usual. I have been obliged to curtail newspaper expenses, and expect you get the news from Washington, the seat of Government. May the God of mercies keep and preserve you all.

Your affectionate brother,
L. Covington.

From D. Rawlings and L. Covington,
To Alex. Covington and Jas. T. Magruder,
Washington, Mississippi Territory.

Georgetown,
March 6th, 1809.

My Dear Friends:

(Col. W. D. Beall will leave this in a few days for Orleans and talks of giving you a call.)

This flows from Col. Covington and myself to our friends A. Covington and James T. Magruder, separately and collectively. All difficulties are now surmounted and with the indulgence of Heaven a part of our families will be off for the Mississippi Territory the 1st week in April, to be followed by ourselves, dear wives and children in June, or the latter part of the summer, if the Col. can make terms with the God of War, so as to secure delay until the hot months shall have passed by. Ric'h Skinner, John Steele and Thos. Rawlings will descend the Ohio with our people from Redstone, whither we shall attend them in person. We are now in this place together on a purchase of goods, and arrangements pertaining to the solemn task before us. Regarding your friendship and judgment, we submit to you for preparation and arrangements for the reception of our negroes at a time which your own calculations may indicate, reckoning from the period intimated for our set out from our doors, and for their engagements, your experience will point out a mode far better than any plans we would possibly advise. That on this score the acts of our friends will be conclusive. L. Covington being obliged to continue on to Orleans, will perhaps leave Mrs. C. for a while in Washington where D. R. will certainly take residence till purchase and improvements can be made to advantage. If houses are not to be obtained in Washington with care and certainty at any time, it will be subject of consideration for you to determine the propriety of availing yourself of the first you can obtain, to commence a rent, say in September; or, perhaps, one may be gotten immediately and a tenant put in it, subject to removal on our arrival. One house can contain us for a short period.

We have been in the midst of inauguration bustle. The course of people was great indeed, say 16,000 to evidence the setting

of one Glorious Sun, and the rising of another, to be, we hope, of similar splendor. Jefferson, thy fame is first in immortality. Thy retirement invites a sensation of delightful pain. We mourn your absence as the true friend of Freedom and humanity, yet when we examine the cause of your retirement, we acknowledge at once a magnanimous necessity. Robert Smith, former Secretary of War, is advanced to the distinguished station of S. of State. All ask the question "is he competent?" My confidence in Madison is my hope; but my friends there is what lawyers call a Locum Tenens, which some dare think, is design of this appointment, till some greater one shall be at liberty. Let this pass as idle conjecture.

L. C. will take up the pen.

D. R.

L. Covington to his dear friends in continuation. 7th March.

We feel great loss to determine in what way our people would best be employed until we shall have joined them. whilst we feel a persuasion that hireing would probably yield us the best profit, we cannot be insensible to the disadvantages which may attend such a plan. It may be the cause of much inconvenience to our friends and tend to the injury of the people. To rent a place for making a crop of corn or vegetables (if practicable) would perhaps result in certain loss, or whether a small place for the above purposes might not be rented for such of our hands to cultivate and reside upon as were not easily to be hired—or whether some might not be employed to your benefit, and not to our——hutting or clearing upon some corner of your purchase. Of all these things we submit to your judgment and experience. You will have discovered that the U. S. Land Office is opened and lands offered on good terms; one twentieth of the purchase money only to be paid down, and four years for the balance. Will it be possible for all of us to get together upon some of this rich and cheap land?

I hope our friend Wailes will virtuously bear up against his misfortunes. The loss of his brother is no doubt afflicting, but I do not despair on account of his prospects here. The new Administration are composed of such as you know, Dr. Eustis of Boston, Secretary of War, and a Mr. Paul Hamilton of S. C. for the Navy.

Yours,

L. Covington.

P. S. The Coln. of the Regt. of Dragoons to which I belong is promoted to Bgd, Gen'l and possibly I may be lifted to his place, which will entitle me to \$90.00 per month.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Washington, Mississippi.

Georgetown,
25th April, 1809.

Dear Brother:—

This will reach you but a little while before our friend D. Rawlings, who is 12 days on his journey to the waters of the Ohio. In a few more, by the blessings of Providence, he will have embarked at Brownsville (Redstone Old Fort) for the Natchez, where we hope for your preparation to receive him and family, together with about 50 black people. In my flock there are 35, two of whom are yours, as I have before apprised you, viz. Dick, a lad received in exchange for your Sam, and a negro girl, Ally, bought for you of Mr. Watson, 13 years of age. She cost 240 dollars, of which particular I know not that I have before apprized you. One other of my gang, Charles, belongs to General Joseph Wilkinson, and with whom I wish you to act as with one of my own. Negro Rachel and two children (wife and children to my man Watt), I wish to be kept in employment as my own until a better disposition can be made of them, so that they may refund to me the expenses consequent upon their outfit journey to that country. I have so repeatedly of late apprized you of our wishes, intentions and movements in relation to this enterprise, that it would be unnecessary to press you with particulars. Let me hope that you will not find so much trouble in making such arrangements and disposition for and with my people as may render them in such way and degree profitable as may reimburse and compensate me for my sacrifices here and my trouble and expense in conducting them to that land of promise. In truth I have fondly flattered myself that my estate in your country (should it please God the people arrive safe) will be far more profitable and more considerable than that I leave in Maryland; but I have to regret that so much of the trouble in the first stages of preparation should be imposed upon my friends. I am however, in some degree consoled that should you need assistance, our friends Magruder and perhaps Wailes will be at hand and will willingly give their aid. Dr. R. cannot fail to be most welcome and useful to your society, yet he, too, will no doubt need your friendly advice and assistance. B. Ellis who goes with my people will be entitled to my consideration and I pray you give to him your patronage; if possible find him employment, and let my old man Isaac work with him at his trade, if you shall think it advisable to do so. Ellis will be indebted to me about \$80 or \$90, and employment will be my only chance for remuneration. To our mutual and worthy friend I shall owe a heavy debt of gratitude for his care and attentions to my people on so long and so fatiguing a journey; let it therefore be your first care to make

such means as I may have in your protection subservient to his convenience. He may want waiters about his house, or nurses for his dear family of infants. We have sent only one trunk, the key of which Mrs. R. will deliver to sister Harriet, in which some furniture for beds, etc., will be found. Use all and everything to thy and our friend's wishes until we unite with thee. At present my going is uncertain. Becca is still in a state of expectation at Galilee, and my dependence upon public men still adds to the uncertainty.

You will no doubt have heard and rejoiced at the settlement of our differences with G. Britain. This circumstance has given rise to great expectations in flour, but as yet has had no effect upon the price of tobacco. In what way it will operate upon the Gallic Emperor, or what effect it may have upon continental Europe is but a subject of speculation which only time can elucidate.

I have repeatedly and circumstantially related to you the result of our endeavor to purchase Parson Gantt's negro; it is now only necessary to add that a Power of Attorney is now on the way for you as I have been a few days since informed.

God bless you and yours, and all friends,

L. Covington.

P. S. You will no doubt have received my letter containing an extract from letter of Mr. G. Dent concerning your money in Georgia. Mr. D. has sometime since returned to Georgia.

I have not heard one word from you since your letters concerning Parson Gantt's negro; in these you seem not to have looked for our serious execution of the plan of removing to your country. Pray write me once a fortnight or by every mail.

I have never received but one letter from Capt. Magruder—I fear he has forgotten his friends. Mrs. M. has often written, but we hear nothing from her or Aunt P. Lady Dunbar is above it I suppose—Remind her of our bet and say that I shall claim it.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Washington, Mississippi Territory.

Galilee,
3rd June, 1809.

My Dear Brother:

I received your favor of the 8th of May by the last mail, and have communicated with W. Gantt on the subject matter of its contents. Notwithstanding the uncertain situation in which your business with him must now be placed, I made him an offer of \$400 to be placed in the hands of L. Magruder and payable to him upon receipt of a letter from you signifying your satisfaction in the receipt of and title to his negro, etc., but he declines the offer and

still hopes that you will act under his power of Attorney which must have reached you ere this. He professes to be satisfied with your endeavors, whatever they may be, and though apprized of your fears of his disappointment, and of all the unfavorable circumstances attending the fellow's situation, as well as of the impositions attempted to be put upon him by Williams. What course you had best pursue in relation to this business your own judgment will best dictate, yet I cannot but hope that you acted upon the parson's authority, and that you have become the purchaser, and that I may receive directions to settle with him for the same before I depart hence. I still have in my hands money of yours, amounting to near two hundred dollars, and if you make no other application of it, I shall endeavor to purchase for you a negro girl and carry out with me. In addition to this sum, I entertain strong hopes of receiving your money from Georgia, which shall be disposed of to the best advantage, but should I be disappointed in this, I shall not fail to make such arrangements with Mr. Dent as will secure its safe reception when received by him.

My departure is still uncertain, and should you have further communications to make on the subject of the negro you would perhaps do well to make them to Mr. Gantt direct, as well as to myself (fearing I may be absent.) I have already informed you of my wish not to leave this before September and I must repeat my request that you will continue to write until I say the word. My people have no doubt arrived by this time at Natchez, and in due time I shall look out for a letter from friend Rawlings and yourself apprizing me of the desired event, and of such arrangement and disposition of them as you may have made, etc. You will have received a letter from General Wilkinson on the subject of his Fellow Charles, as to whom you will know how to act. My nian Watt's wife and two children you will consider as mine until better arrangements can be made for them and expenses reimbursed. I am glad you are pleased with the exchange made for Sam, and hope you will not dislike the application of money made for negro girl Ally. She together with Dick is sent on with my people under the care of our friend D. R., to whom we shall be largely indebted on the score of grateful acknowledgements, and I know you will find pleasure in repayment with your best efforts for his convenience and accommodation in that strange land. Of all my little matters consigned to your care, submit them to his use at pleasure.

Why does Capt. M., our worthy friend and kinsman, so entirely forget his old friends in this quarter; no one of his or wife's letters make mention of me or mine any more than if we were not in the land of the living, only that James M. might be sent with us. In

one to Mrs. S. he desires to be remembered to Mr. R., but does not extend his recollections $\frac{1}{2}$ mile further.

Love to all,
L. Covington.

P. S. I write you this letter in great haste and know that I have omitted much that I wished to say, but look by every mail to hear from you.

Where is my friend Wailes? I hope he is well employed. Please tell Mr. Ellis that his mother and friends are all well and have lately written. Say to friend Rawlings and his dear Carosposa that Pinataway relations have been often here; both left this yesterday in health and expressed great solicitude for their welfare. I have had much talk with them. Galilee friends send much love.

Leonard Covington to
Alexander Covington,
Washington, Mississippi Territory.

The Forest, Maryland—
Galilee, Md.
22nd July, 1809.

My Dear Brother:

I hasten to relieve your suspense arising from the dread of continued indisposition of relatives in the Galilee family. The blessings of health and the blessed train of agreeable enjoyments attendant thereon are again restored to us. With cheerful hearts and a requisite store for the satisfaction of every enjoyment, we have everything for which to be thankful. Healthful friends, with pleasing prospects, to whom we shall soon hasten, and with whom we shall mingle our joys and our sorrows, are amongst the first of these blessings, for which we render our grateful acknowledgements to the great Author of every Good.

All your favors up to the 28th, Ult., (only three weeks since) have come safely to hand and their contents duly noticed and replied to. Our friend D. R.'s favor of the 21st ult., which you mention, was acknowledged the receipt by the last mail, and deprives me of much matter with which I might fill this letter, for what I communicate to the one (friends so dear) must not be withheld from the other. You have satisfied my curiosity touching your profits and disbursements of the past year by making me sensible of the many wants of new housekeepers, and unavoidable expenses of fresh establishments. On the subject of schools I await your judgment, tho' with some anxiety. In my last I touched this subject in a new light for the consideration of D. R. and yourself; look at it well and be ample in your thoughts and opinions.

I wish you had given me the names of those of my people that you had not been able to hire; pray be particular on this head, as

every circumstance which can tend to show the prospective gain, or the hopes of obtaining comfortable quarters in that country, both for whites and blacks, will not a little facilitate my plans here; for the blacks, the idea of contentment and the assurance of good living is everything; for the former, those hopes of gain on easy terms and at short periods will stimulate to anything.

Will a deficiency of crops be the result of the drought you complain of? I trust you have not over-rated your present prospects, and that the proceeds of your labour will not disappoint your expectations; but are not \$2000 small earnings for your force? Did not your "hire list" amount to nearly that sum?

Why has friend R. allowed us to remain so long in suspense concerning his negro man who fled from him at Pittsburg? It was of sufficient interest with all his friends to be anxious about his recovery. How does the matter stand, and what has become of Cartright and his Golden Dreams?

I wish I had the time to touch upon the subject of politics, yet I will look a little to its effects. In every view of the subject, its bearings upon our feelings and our pecuniary interests, I cannot but contemplate it with feelings of the deepest interest and with sentiments of the profoundest regret. The causes which have led to our present distressed situation are ever to be deprecated, and are certainly of the most melancholy cast, for I consider our political dissensions, or rather the artifices of a certain sect of politicians, the primary cause of the distress which we every day meet with among the poorer class of our citizens, particularly those who are indebted (both rich and poor), and numerous indeed is this class. I believe I am within the bounds of truth when I say literally not one cent can now be had for tobacco, the only staple of our country; the price is truly as flat as a flounder, or as Mathew Lyon's pan cake, nor do I see even a distant prospect of better times. The crops now on the ground are far exceeding any former year within my recollection: when and wherein can we possibly get a vent for such a redundant luxury? That the cotton making business may, ere long, be as completely overdone as the tobacco, is my constant dread; what think you of the matter? And how now stand the market and prospects with this article. Allow me, before I conclude to repeat my wishes and expectations that you will have determined and fixed upon some permanent plan and place for our future residence, where our union may be cemented by some wise scheme of neighborly affiliation. Let your fraternity embrace all such as are willing and whose congeniality of mind and temper will insure us an exception from cabals, intrigues, etc. Go into the woods, will be my advice, where we can have elbow room without much cost.

Has your new Governor reached his seat of government, and how do you like his debut: Present by respects to him. Say to

Williams, (your Lt. Governor) I have him often in my recollections, and hope for a renewed extended acquaintance.

Will you keep an eye to Ellis' employment and save me \$100 for which I have his bond. Will old Isaac do for a carpenter, and how is he engaged? What is Steel about and how fights he his men? Say to him that W. B. will soon be married to Miss Nelly Pickerell. Tell J. M. (my kinsman) that poor Leonard is quite defeated by Miss Maria; the fair one seems positive in her refusals and Len has put on quite a doleful countenance. What dreadful infatuation has possessed our fair cousins here, or what evil genius has prompted them to commit suicide upon the matrimonial prospects which that country holds out to them, I am totally unable to imagine. In truth, it is passing strange that Lavinia nor Mary will sojourn in your land. We all here in cordial unanimity offer you our best wishes, and our unfeigned love to all, to be measured out in due proportion to all dear friends.

L. Covington.

Leonard Covington to

D. Rawlings,

Washington, Mississippi Territory.

Hancock Town, Md.

15th Oct, 1809.

My Dear R.:

In a letter to my brother a few days since you are apprized of my departure from Galilee and progress for Mississippi. I have there said that Mr. Waters' family would not accompany us to your country, being unable to command the requisite stock of cash. Things have however eventuated more favorably since, and by express we are requested to await his coming and this day we expect him and family, bag and baggage to overtake us. Tomorrow morning we resume our march and, God willing, shall be with you in the early part of December. We are, however, under some apprehension on account of the state of the western waters; at present we are told that the Ohio is impassable, so low are its waters. Wheeling is now our aim, and if we find the waters too low to set us afloat when we arrive there, we shall probably continue our route by land through the states of Ohio and Kentucky to Louisville, where there is never a want of water.

Our party will consist of Mr. W. and family, including 5 or 6 negroes, your brother Thomas, James Magruder, Sammy Sasscer (my man Friday), wife, five children, five servants and self, with the damndest cavalcade that ever man was burdened with; not less than seven horses compose my Troop: they convey a close carriage (Jersey Stage) a Gig and horse Cart, so that my family are trans-

ported with comfort and convenience, though at considerable expense. All these odd matters and contrivances I design to take with me to Mississippi if possible. Mr. Waters will also take down his wagon and team.

Mr. Waters will be greatly disappointed should you not receive this letter in time to procure for him some snug, cheap and convenient little tenement; this he begs you will do for him if possible, or make such other provision for him as your better judgment and circumstances may dictate. Please say to my Brother all that is herein contained, that he may be fully apprized of all my movements. That he will have arranged for my advantage and convenience as far as circumstances would allow, I am entirely confident.

As to matters in the big world, I have but little to say. Our State elections have just ended and in favor of the Rights of Man. Republicanism will prevail in the House of Representatives by a majority of about 4: the Eastern Shore has saved us. On this side of the Bay we do but little better than last year: Alleghany all feds as last year. Frederick sends one Republican in the room of Sappington: P. G. as bad as——Little Calvert 3 and 1 Rept. Thos. Wilkinson (vice) T. Reynolds left out. You will no doubt have heard of the arrival of a new British Minister (Mr. Jackson of Copenhagen memory). He has offered nothing for public consideration, but has settled down as the silent successor of Erskine, who is recalled: his qualifications for intrigue were not of the Percival and Canning School. He would not answer for the wily policy of St. James.

The defeat of the Austrians by Bonaparte has been considered as favorable to an accommodation of our differences with England, but when or how this world's bustle will end God only can know. God bless you all.

L. Covington.

Leonard Covington to

Alexander Covington,

Washington, Mississippi Territory.

Cincinnati, Ohio.

1st December, 1809.

Dear Brother:—

I snatch a hasty moment from the bustle of starting and a crowd of engagements to apprise you of my situation. This will be handed you by Mr. T. Rawlings, or Sammy Sasscer, who is my agent and has charge of my horses, to be delivered to your care. I send them through by land on account of the low state of the water, and to save expense. After a most tedious, difficult and laborious voyage from Wheeling we arrived here on the 28th ult., and have been de-

tained in executing certain military duties at the Garrison in Newport, but shall again weigh anchor tomorrow or the next day and again court the favors of the liquid current, which still remains unpropitious, from which I anticipate a renewal of my difficulties and fatigues. To drag through shoals, sandbars and ripples is my dreaded fate, but we all meet it with good health and unbroken spirits. Look for me about the end of the year and make some preparations for the wearied travellers. Our preparations in the way of provisions will be trifling. The want of room in our boat and scanty means confine me to a few hundred pounds of pork and a few barrels of flour. Pray provide for my people so as to keep them in motion and in comfort if their earnings be adequate. God bless you and all friends. Becca most affectionately unites in love and best wishes for Sister Harriet and your dear family.

L. Covington.

FINIS.